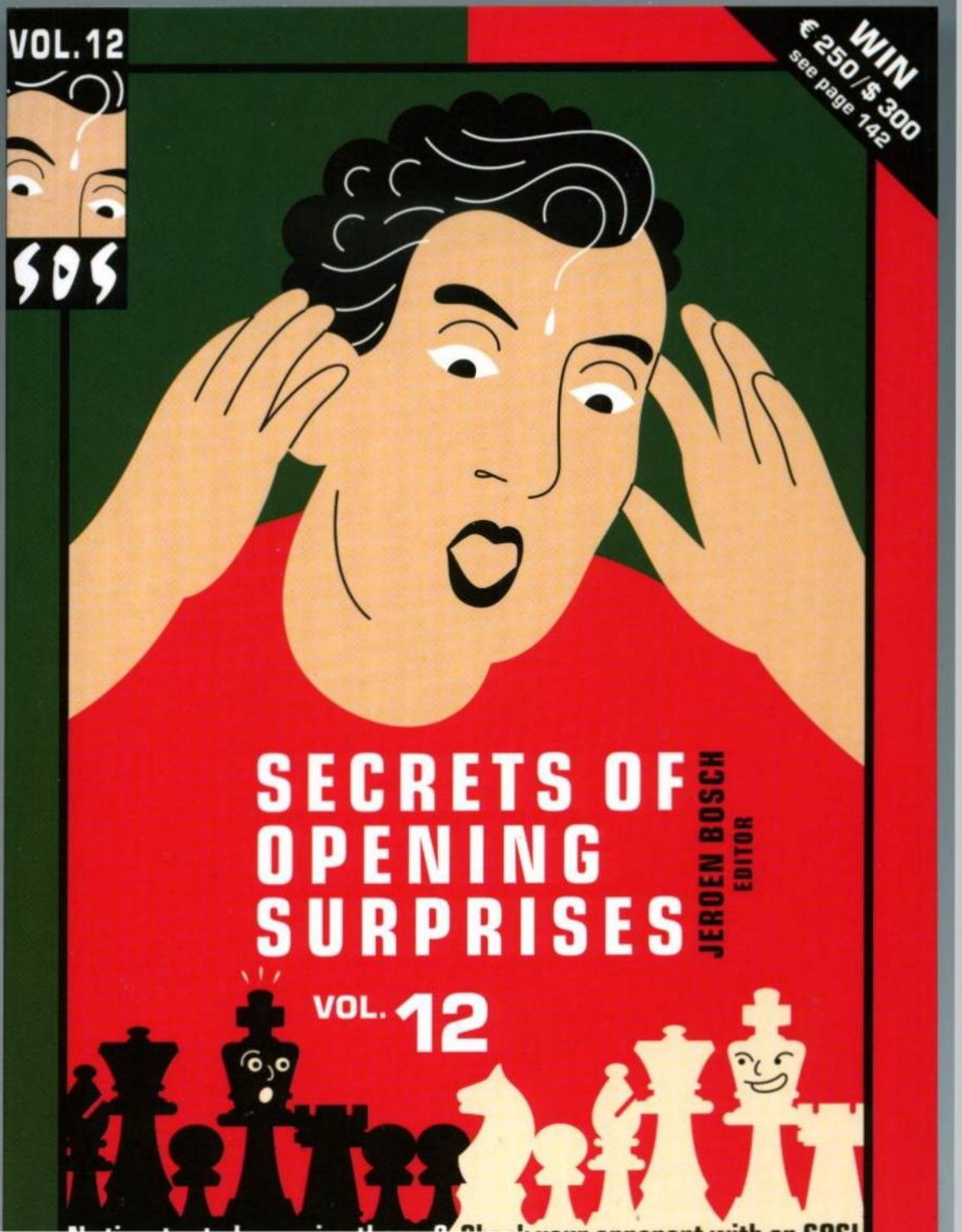
VOL. 12
SOS
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see page 142
SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES
JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR
VOL. 12

SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 12

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

12

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CHAPTER 1

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The SOS Files

Read SOS and Go for Mate

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

A regular contributor to the SOS-series is Dimitri Reinderman. That the Dutch GM also takes a keen interest in what his fellow-authors write is obvious from the next game. Ruben Felgaer wrote on Short's 2.♘e2 versus the Caro-Kann. Enjoy the commentary by Reinderman, and can you spot the lovely combination at the end?

□ **Dimitri Reinderman**
■ **Sybolt Strating**
Hilversum 2009

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 More common is 3...c5 because of the game continuation. **4.♘g3 ♗g6** It is hard to believe in the artificial 4...♗d7 and 4...♗e6 which are also mentioned by Felgaer. **5.h4 h6** The SOS Files of Volume 10 mentions 5...h5 as an improvement. **6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6** The point of White's set-up. White is locking in Black's bishop. **7...fxe6** Black does not have to accept the pawn. Playable is 7...♕d6. **8.d4 ♕d6** Black can return the pawn with 8...e5 9.dxe5 e6, although it isn't pretty. **9.f4** With a clear advantage according to Felgaer. I am less sure about the objective value, but in a practical game I was quite happy to reach this position! **9...♘f6 10.♗d3 c5 11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♘c3 ♕b4 14.♘e2 ♘e4?!** The knight has to return soon. Black should have castled. **15.a3 ♕a5 16.♗e3 a6** Both here and subsequently Black could have defended better. However, then the lovely mate would never have occurred. **17.b4 ♕d8 18.♕b1 ♘f6 19.♗xh7 ♖xh7 20.♕g6+ ♔d7 21.♘a4 b6 22.♖c1 ♖h8 23.f5** Rybka indicates 23.♘g1! as winning, but the text suffices. **23...exf5** 23...♔c7 24.♘f4 ♔b7 25.♘xe6 ♕e8 was the toughest defence. **24.♘f4 e6 25.♕f7+ ♕e7 26.♘xb6+ ♔d6**

White to play and win.

27.♘g6!! The newspapers wrote that White could have won here with 27.♕xc7+ ♗xc7 28.♘xa8 ♖xa8 29.♘xe6, but things are not so clear after 29...♔xe6 30.♖xc6+ ♔d7. **27...♕xf7 28.♗f4+ e5 29.♗xe5+** At first, I calculated 29.dxe5+, when Black has 29...♔c7 with advantage. Then I spotted the text. **29...♘xe5** My op-

ponent wanted to resign here, but I asked him to continue. He kindly acquiesced. **30.dxe5+ ♔e6 31.♖c6+ ♗d6** So the bishop finally made a move in this game. **32.♖xd6** mate!

Turgenev or Ragozin – amateur vs professional

SOS-11, Chapter 16, p.125

We receive many interesting letters from readers all over the world. Thus Aaro Jalas from Finland found Nikita Vitiugov's suggestions in the Accelerated Ragozin quite instructive, but he felt that more alternatives on move 4 could have been included. (He particularly mentions 4.♗d2 and even 4.e4.) Indeed, he goes on to raise the important general point that opening manuals often do not discuss 'second-rate' alternatives, concentrating as they do on the variations chosen by GMs and IMs. He ends his argument with a request that we will take to heart: 'Please, write practical books for us low-level club players – books, where "amateur variations" are seriously considered!'

For historical interest, but also to illustrate his point, Mr Jalas kindly sent us a game by Russian writer Ivan Turgenev as cited in the Estonian book *Caissa Riik ja ruutlid* (1984). We can understand why Mr Jalas enjoyed this particular game where the strong amateur player Turgenev gave the Polish professional player Matsuski (or Maczuski, as his name is given elsewhere) a good drubbing in the Café de la Régence.

□ **Ladislas Maczuski**
■ **Ivan Turgenev**
Paris 1861

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 'Is this the first Accelerated Ragozin?' asks Mr Jalas, played as it is before the birth of both Nimzowitsch and Ragozin? **4.f3** A serious reply. Vitiugov discusses 4.a3. **4...c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♕a5** Here 6...♘f6 transposes to the 4.f3 Nimzo-Indian. **7.♗d2 ♘f6 8.♕c2 ♗d7?! 9.e4! dxe4 10.fxe4 cxd4?! 11.cxd4 ♕h5 12.♘f3 ♕g6 13.♗d3!? ♕xg2 14.♖f1 ♘c6 15.0-0-0 ♘g4 16.♖de1 h6 17.d5?! ♘ce5 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖g1 ♕f3 20.♖e3 ♕f6** White has enough for the pawn, but not more. **21.♗c3 ♘xd3+?!** 21...♕f4 **22.♕xd3 ♕e7?! 23.♗xg7** Now Black is in trouble. **23...♖g8 24.♖eg3 0-0-0 25.♕e3 b6 26.♕xh6?! ♕c5**

27.♗d4? A flashy but faulty combination, but the precautionary 27.♔b2 is not the type

of move you would associate with the Café de la Régence. **27...♕xc4+** 27...♕xd4 28.♖xg8 ♕xc4+ 29.♔b2 ♕d4+ should end in a perpetual. **28.♖c3 ♖xg1+ 29.♔d2 ♕xc3+ 30.♔xc3 ♖g4 31.♕h5 ♖f4 32.♕e5 ♖f3+ 33.♔b2 ♖g8!** Now the rooks are much stronger than the queen. Turgenev does not let his opponent escape: **34.♗c3 ♗a4 35.♕d4 ♖g2+ 36.♗d2 ♗d7! 37.h4 ♖ff2 38.♔c3 ♖xd2 39.♕h8+ ♔b7 40.h5 exd5 41.exd5 ♖xd5 42.h6 ♗f5 43.♕f6 ♖c2+ 44.♔b4 a5+ 45.♔a4 ♖c7 46.♔b3 ♖b5+ 47.♔a4 ♗d7!** And White resigned.

This was Turgenev's only victory in a 6-game match against Matsuski, according to *The Even More Complete Chess Addict* (1993).

French or Caro-Kann: Why Worry?

SOS-9, Chapter 13, p.102

Réti's line against the French 1.e4 e6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 was covered by Alexander Finkel in SOS-9. Clyde Nakamura from Honolulu, Hawaii, directed our attention to a similar line against the Caro-Kann. Vasiukov employed 1.e4 c6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 in the 1961 Soviet Championship to beat none other than David Bronstein. I found the following game also quite entertaining.

□ **Dragutin Sahovic**
■ **Patrick Daumin**
Orange open 1990

1.e4 c6 2.b3 d5 3.♗b2 dxe4 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♘ge2 ♗g4

Instead, 5...♗f5 6.♘g3 e6 7.♕e2 ♘bd7 8.♘cxe4 ♗xe4 9.♘xe4 ♕a5 10.♗c3 ♕b6 11.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 was about equal in Vasiukov-Bronstein, URS-ch Baku 1961.

6.h3 ♗h5 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♗g2 ♘bd7 9.g5 ♘d5 10.♘xe4 e5 11.h4 f6?! 12.gxf6 gxf6 13.h5 ♗f5 14.c4!? ♘f4? 15.♘xf4 exf4 16.♕e2 ♔f7 17.♗h3 17.0-0-0 **17...♗xe4 18.♕xe4 ♘c5 19.♕f5**

19...♕e7+

Black cannot win the bishop: 19...♘d3+ 20.♔e2 (20.♔f1 ♘xb2?? 21.♕e6+ ♔g7 22.h6+ ♔xh6 23.♗f5+ also mates) 20...♘xb2?? (correct is 20...♕d6 21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.♔xd3 and White is a pawn up) 21.♕e6+ ♔g7 22.h6+ ♔xh6 23.♗f5+ ♔g7 24.♖ag1 mate!

20.♔d1 ♖e8 21.f3 ♗h6 22.♔c2 ♗g5 23.♖ae1 White is completely winning by now. **23...♕d6 24.♖xe8 ♔xe8 25.♕c8+** Or 25.d4. **25...♕d8 26.♖e1+ ♔f7 27.♕f5** Black resigned.

Bashing the Grünfeld

SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28
SOS-6, Chapter 2, p.16

Volume 12 of the SOS-series continues where the others have left off. Adrian Mikhalchishin and Jeroen Bosch analyse 4.g4 against the Grünfeld proper (see Chapter 7), while Sebastian Siebrecht favours 5.h4 via an English move order (see Chapter 5).
First a note of warning:

□ **Miso Cebalo**
■ **Alexander Riazantsev**
Biel 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 Following SOS-3 this line was enthusiastically taken up by GM Cebalo who later wrote a Survey for the New In Chess Yearbook. **4...c5** This must be the critical move.

5.dxc5

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♕b3!? is a suggestion of Yearbook editor Peter Boel. He continues with 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.e3 0-0 11.h5. See the Forum section of Yearbook 93 (p. 22).

Rather than 9...♗g7 Black has 9...♗e6

Now after 10.♕xb7 ♗d5 11.e3 Black has both 11...♖b8 12.♕a6 e5, and 11...♘xd4 12.♕b2 ♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 a6!? (13...f6 14.e4) 14.♕xh8 (14.e4 ♖g8) 14...♗xf3 15.♗b2 ♗xh1 16.♖d1 ♕a5+ 17.♗c3 ♕c5 18.♗g7 ♕b4+ 19.♖d2 e6 20.♗xa6 ♗c6 which is about equal. Obviously there is room for creativity in these suggested lines.

5...d4 6.♘b5 e5 7.e3

Other moves do not improve:

– 7.♘f3 ♗xc5! (not 7...♘c6 8.♗g5! ♗e7 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♘d6+±) 8.♘xe5 a6 9.♕a4 0-0 10.♘d3 which is unclear according to Thomas Neuer in the Forum of Yearbook 89.

– 7.♗g5 ♗xc5 8.♗xf6 ♗b4+ was given by Glenn Flear on www.chesspublishing.com. 9.♘c3 ♕xf6 10.a3 ♗a5 11.b4 dxc3 12.bxa5 ♗f5 and White is in trouble (Boel, Yearbook 93).

– 7.♘d6+ ♗xd6 8.cxd6 ♕xd6 9.e3 is Flear's attempt to equalize with white, Boel gives 9...♘c6 10.exd4 ♘xd4 as better for Black.

7...♗xc5 Or 7...♘c6 8.exd4 ♘xd4, Cebalo-Sibenik, Pula 2004. **8.exd4 exd4 9.♘f3**

Now Black is very OK after **9...0-0! 10.♗e2** No improvement is 10.♘bxd4 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 12.♗e3 ♘g4, Flear. Or 12...♕xb2. **10...♘c6 11.♗f4 ♗f5! 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 a6 14.♘c7?!** 14.♘a3 ♖e8+ is no fun either. **14...♖c8 15.a3 ♖xc7 16.♗xc7 ♕xc7 17.b4 ♖e8+ 18.♔f1 ♗f8 19.♖d1 a5 20.b5 ♘e5 21.♘xe5** Or 21.♕xd4 ♘eg4. **21...♕xe5 22.♖h3 ♗xa3! 23.♕xd4 ♕e2+ 24.♔g1 ♗c5!** White resigned.

In an entertaining article called 'Triple Trouble for the Grünfeld', Ian Rogers offers three wonderful suggestions in the 4.♗g5 line.

A game from the 2010 World Team Championship between Turkey and Russia:

□ **Mohamed Ezat**
■ **Dmitry Yakovenko**
Bursa 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗g5

♘**e4 5.cxd5!?** Rogers also covers 5.♕c1!? and 5.h4!?. **5...♘xg5** 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♕xd5 7.♘f3 and White possibly saves a tempo on the main line that starts with 5.♗h4. **6.h4** Already played by Euwe in 1923, against Van Hoorn.

6...♘e4 See SOS-6 for the alternatives 6...e6, 6...c6, and 6...♘e6. **7.♘xe4 ♕xd5 8.♕d3** A new attempt. 8.f3 ♗g7 9.e3 ♕a5+ 10.♔f2 ♘c6 was Goldsmith-Kagan, Melbourne 1993. The sound option, according to Rogers, is the ending that IM Voloshin has successfully played: 8.♘c3 ♕a5 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.♕a4+ ♕xa4 11.♘xa4. **8...♗g7 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♘c3 ♕a5 11.e3 0-0 12.♕b5! ♕b4** 12...♕xb5 13.♗xb5 ♗d7?! (13...♘b4 14.0-0-0 ♗e6) 14.♘d5!. **13.♕xb4** 13.h5!?. **13...♘xb4 14.0-0-0 c6 15.h5 a5 16.a3 ♘a6 17.♘a4?! b5 18.♘b6 ♖b8 19.♘xc8 ♖fxc8 20.♔b1 a4 21.hxg6 hxg6 22.♗e2 c5** with equality (Black won after a long game).

SOS vs the Grünfeld on Top-level

SOS-10, Chapter 9, p.65

In the World Cup 2009 in Khanty-Mansiysk Tomi Nybäck managed to upset the experienced Peter Svidler with a SOS line versus the Grünfeld. This line (the Kruppa Variation) has been steadily gaining in popularity, which is why its theoretical workload is increasing. Let's take a look!

□ **Tomi Nybäck**
■ **Peter Svidler**
Khanty-Mansiysk World Cup 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 This characterizes the so-called Kruppa Variation. SOS-author Igor Lysyj was extremely positive about White's chances in his article for SOS-10.

7...c5 8.♖c1 0-0

8...♕a5 is the big alternative to 8...0-0. After 9.♕d2

the lines fork:

– 9...♘d7 was played by Grünfeld expert Ftacnik: 10.♘f3 e5 11.dxe5 (much stronger looks 11.♘xe5! ♘xe5 12.dxe5, as 12...♗xe5?! is met by 13.♗b5+ and the bishop cannot be taken because of mate on d8!) 11...0-0 12.♗c4 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 (14.0-0 ♗e6 15.♗d5) 14...♗g7 15.0-0 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.e5 ♖f7 and Black was OK in Polak-Ftacnik, Prievidza 2009.

– 9...h6 10.♗e3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 0-0 13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.d5 ♖d8 15.♔e1 ♘a5 16.♗f4 and the ending is very pleasant for White, Erdös-Agopov, Berlin 2009.

– 9...♕a4 10.♗e2!? (10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♗e2 ♕xe4 is the move order in SOS-10) 10...♘c6 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♘f3 f6 (12...♕xe4 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖fe1 is analysed by Lysyj in some detail) 13.♗e3 (13.♘xe5?! fxg5) 13...♘c4 14.♕d3 ♘d6 (14...♘xe3 15.♕xe3 0-0 16.0-0±) 15.♗xc5 ♕xe4 16.0-0 ♗f5 17.♕d2 and White had an obvious edge in Nybäck-Negi, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

– 9...0-0 10.♘f3 (10.♗xe7? ♖e8 11.♗xc5 ♖xe4+ 12.♗e2 ♘a6 favours Black) 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 e6 13.♗b5! a6 (13...♘c6 also fails to equalize, see SOS-10) 14.♗a4 b5 15.♗b3 ♗b7 (15...a5 is met by 16.♖c5! as indicated by Lysyj) 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 a5 18.♖c7 a4 19.♖xb7 axb3 20.axb3 with an extra pawn in Vovk-Bezemer, Dieren 2009.

9.♘f3 cxd4

Black is not obliged to take on d4. Instead, he can try 9...♗g4 Indeed, this was Svidler's choice in a rapid tie-break game (yes he won the second game in the match!) versus Nybäck in Khanty-Mansiysk. After 10.d5 Black has:

– 10...f5, which was called critical by Lysyj in SOS-10. See the SOS Files of volume 11 for the SOS Prize winning game Sadorra-Kazhgaleev, Subic Bay 2009.

– 10...♘d7 11.♗e2 f5 is answered by 12.d6, when after 12...♗f6 13.♗xf6 exf6 14.0-0! ♖e8 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 fxe4 17.♗xe4 White won with straightforward play. Prohaszka-Shankland, Budapest 2009.

– 10...♕d6 was Svidler's choice. 11.♗e2 (White was better after 11.♕b3 b6 – 11...♗xf3!? – 12.♘d2 ♗c8 13.♗e2 ♗a6 14.♗xa6 ♘xa6 15.0-0 ♘c7 16.♘c4 ♕d7 17.♗f4 ♖fe8 18.♘e5 ♕d6 19.♘xg6 ♕xg6 20.♗xc7 ♕xe4 21.c4, Noiroux-Konguvel, La Fère 2009) 11...♘d7 12.h3 (12.0-0) 12...♗xf3 13.♗xf3 b5 14.c4 b4 15.0-0 a5 and Black had equalized in Nybäck-Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk rapid 2009.

10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘f6 12...f5 13.d6! ♕a5+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♗xe2 16.dxe7±. **13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗d3**

14...♕a5+

Svidler is the first to vary and with reason: 14...h6 15.♗f4 e6 16.♗c7 ♕e8 17.d6 ♗c6 18.♕e2 ♘h5 was Ponomariov-Svidler, Moscow 2006. Pono now kept a slight edge with 19.g3, but Lysyj opines that White's advantage is quite substantial after 19.♕e3!.

15.♕d2 ♕a4!? 15...♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 is a familiar pleasant ending. **16.♖c4 ♕a3 17.0-0 ♖ac8**

Keeping a pair of rooks on with 17...♗b5 does not really help: 18.♖c3 ♕a5 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.e5 ♗g7 21.♗xb5 ♕xb5 22.♖c7 ♖ad8 23.♖d1 still favours White, for example 23...♖d7 24.d6.

18.♖fc1 ♖xc4 19.♖xc4 ♗b5 19...♖c8 20.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 21.♕c2 is no picnic either. **20.♖c3 ♕a5 21.♗xf6** Forced, in view of the threats on the rook. **21...♗xf6 22.e5 ♗g7 23.♗xb5 ♕xb5 24.♖c7** Despite the exchanges Nybäck has kept the advantage. Svidler is forced to keep the d-pawn at bay. In return White obtains chances along the seventh rank. **24...♖d8 25.♖xe7 ♗f8** The only move. 25...♕xd5?? loses to 26.♖e8+, and 25...♖xd5? to 26.♕f4. **26.♖c7 ♖xd5** It was safer to give up a pawn to defend ac-

tively in the ending after 26...♕xd5 27.♕xd5 ♖xd5 28.♖xb7 ♖a5. **27.♕f4 ♖d1+ 28.♔h2 ♖d7 29.♖c8! ♖e7**

30.e6!? Perhaps not the best move, but a good practical shot. **30...♖xe6** It is not so easy to find the right defence: 30...♕f5! is what the engines like. **31.♘g5** Now White's attack is decisive. **31...♖e7** Or 31...♕d7 32.♖d8! winning. **32.♘xh7! ♔xh7 33.♖xf8 ♔g7**

Material is equal, but White has a winning attack. Well-calculated by Nybäck! **34.♕h4! g5** 34...♔xf8?? 35.♕h8 mate! **35.♕h8+ ♔g6 36.f4! ♔f5** 36...gxf4? 37.♖g8+ ♔f5 38.♕h5++−. **37.♖d8 f6 38.♖d6 ♕b2** 38...♖f7 39.♕h5 ♖e7 40.♕h6 ♕b2 41.♕f8 ♖c7 42.♖d5++−. **39.♕h5 ♕e2** 39...♖e2 40.♕g4+ ♔g6 41.♕xg5++−; 39...♕f2 40.♕g4+ ♔e4 41.fxg5+ ♕f4+ 42.♕xf4+ ♔xf4 43.gxf6+−. **40.♖d5+ ♔xf4 41.♕g6** Black resigned.

A Kortchnoi Favourite

SOS-1, Chapter 4, p.40

The Spanish Four Knights is well-countered by 4...♗d6 as we know from the very first volume of the SOS-series. This is actually a Kortchnoi favourite; out-of-the-box thinking is of course a trademark of the great fighter.

The present game was played in one of the lower leagues of the Dutch team competition (Kortchnoi's team is aiming to go up into the highest division) and will not find its way into the database by its own accord. So as a special treat here it is.

□ **Richard Hendriks**
■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
Netherlands tt 2009/10

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗d6 5.d3

Natural, but it offers White nothing special.

– 5.a3 This useful waiting move is covered in the SOS Files of volumes 2 and 5. 5...0-0 6.d3 ♘e7?! (6...♖e8) 7.♗g5 ♘g6 8.h4!? c6 9.♗c4 ♗e7? 10.h5! ♘h8? 11.h6! (not 11.♘xe5 d5! with good counterplay) 11...g6 12.d4 exd4 13.♕xd4 d6 14.0-0-0 ♗e6 15.e5 and Black resigned in Roy Chowdhury-Laxman, New Delhi 2010.

– 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 ♘e7?! (6...♖e8; 6...h6) 7.♘xe5 ♗xe5 8.d4 d6 (8...♗xh2+ 9.♔xh2±) 9.dxe5 dxe5 and White was slightly better due to his pair of bishops in Michiels-Stefanova, Antwerp 2009.

– 5.a4 0-0 6.d3 ♖e8 7.♗c4 h6 8.g4 ♗b4! 9.g5 d5! was the energetic course of Böh-

nisch-Kortchnoi, Dresden 2006. See the SOS Files of Volume 5.
– 5.g4 a6 6.♗c4 ♗c5 7.♘g5 d5! was Sammalvuo-Gausel, Turin Olympiad 2006. See the SOS Files of Volume 7.
5...h6 Or 5...0-0. **6.h3 a6 7.♗xc6 dxc6 8.♗e3**
After the game the players concluded that 8. d4 was stronger. For example 8.d4 exd4 9.♕xd4 c5?! (with the help of his engine Hendriks later found the improvement 9...♕e7!, when Black is a tad better) 10.♕d3 and Kortchnoi's verdict was that White is better. The problem is that Black cannot prevent e5 all that easily.
8...c5 9.♕d2 b6 10.♘e2 ♗b7 11.b3?

A very bad move according to both players. Still, it takes someone of the level of Kortchnoi to demonstrate why weakening the a1-h8 diagonal is so bad.
11...♘h5! 12.c4 f5! Where did he find the recipe for eternal youth? With dynamic play Kortchnoi has grabbed a considerable edge. **13.exf5?** Hendriks indicates 13.♕c2 as the only move. **13...♕f6 14.♘c3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♕xf5 16.0-0-0 ♕xf3** and Black is a pawn up, and won easily after **17.♘e4 0-0-0 18.♔b1 ♗e7 19.♕c2 ♘f6! 20.♘c3 g5 21.♘a4?! e4 22.dxe4 ♘xe4 23.♖he1 ♗f6 24.b4** A desperate attempt. **24...♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 b5 26.cxb5 axb5 27.♗d2 bxa4 28.♕xa4 ♕d3+ 29.♔c1 ♕c4+ 30.♔b1 ♔b7** White resigned.

One Step Beyond in the Modern

SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106

In SOS-1 I investigated 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5!?, with the idea to regain the pawn after 4.exd5 ♘f6, obtaining a structure that resembles certain lines from the Alekhine or the Scandinavian. Here is a contribution from Or Cohen (who wrote on the Petroff with 3...♘xe4 in SOS-10) who argues that Black can go one step beyond and actually gambit the pawn after 4.exd5 with 4...c6.

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5 4.exd5 4.♘xd5?! offers limited chances for an advantage after 4...c6 and Black retrieves the pawn. **4...c6!?**

5.dxc6
5.♗c4!? transposes to a theoretical continuation (1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d5 5.exd5). White has chances for an advantage here. However, it seems strange not to accept the gambit.
5.♗f4!? could be the choice of some practical players, wishing to avoid all prepara-

tion. This is a viable option. This position could arise after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 g6 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.exd5. Even so, as Mikhail Botvinnik demonstrated in 1959 – Black's prospects after 5...cxd5 are fine:
– 6.♘f3 (other attempts are quite harmless) 6...a6!? (an important prophylactic move) 7.h3!? (7.♕d2 ♘c6 8.0-0-0 ♘f6 and White is looking for trouble, as his pieces are far from ideally deployed) 7...♘c6 8.♗e2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘e5 ♗f5 with equal chances.
– 6.♘b5 (this is the justification of 5.♗f4) 6...♘a6 7.♕e2 (this is White's trick in this position) 7...♘f6 8.♘d6+ ♔f8 (Black should not be too disturbed by the fact that he is denied from castling) 9.♘xc8 (9.♘b5 ♗d7) 9...♖xc8 10.c3 and now a sample line runs: 10...♘c7 11.♘f3 ♘e6 12.♗e3 ♕b6 13.g3 ♘e4 14.♗g2 ♗f6!? 15.0-0 ♔g7.

5...♘xc6 White can now only keep the pawn by pushing it forward.

6.d5 ♘b4

7.a3!?

This is the critical continuation as mentioned by Khalifman. White forces Black to give up his important dark-squared bishop. Let us look at some alternatives:
– 7.♘f3 ♗f5!? 8.♗b5+ ♔f8 9.♗a4 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘xd5 11.♕d4 ♘gf6 12.0-0 ♔g7 13.♗b3 ♖c8 with some counterplay.
– 7.♗c4 ♗f5 (worse is 7...♕c7?! 8.♗b3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 10.♗d2 ♕e5+ – 10...♕c5? 11.♗e3 ♕c3+ 12.♔f1!± Black is in a terrible state – 11.♘e2 ♘xd5 12.c4 ♘df6 13.0-0 ♗g4 14.f3 0-0-0 15.♕e1 with a slight edge) 8.♗b3 ♘f6 9.♘f3 ♕a5 10.0-0 ♖d8 and Black has some compensation for the pawn.
– 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗c4 (an inferior version of 7.♗c4 – 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7=) 8...♕c7 9.♗b3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♕c5 12.♘f3 (12.♗e3 ♕c3+ 13.♔f1?! ♗b5+ illustrates the difference between 7.♗b5+ and 7.♗c4. A perpetual is more or less forced: 14.♘e2 ♘f6 15.♗d4 ♗xe2+ 16.♔xe2 ♘bxd5 17.♗xd5 ♘xd5 18.♗xh8 ♘f4+ 19.♔f1 ♕c4+ 20.♔g1 ♘e2+ 21.♔f1 ♘f4+=) 12...♘xd5 and Black has a pawn for which White has some compensation.

7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘xd5 9.♗b5+! The point! Black must lose the right to castle.

9...♔f8 10.c4

10...♘gf6!

Black's surprising reply that justifies the existence of this line.

11.♘e2 Not 11.cxd5? ♕a5+. **11...♔g7**

Here Khalifman claims that 12.♕d2 promises White a big plus. However, I don't think that matters are that simple.

12.♕d2 ♘b6! Khalifman only mentions 12...♘c7 13.♕h6+ ♔g8 14.0-0 ♘xb5 15.cxb5 ♗f5 16.♗b2±. **13.♕h6+ ♔g8**

And suddenly the bishop on b5 is awkwardly placed, Black plans ...a6.

14.0-0 Play is unclear after 14.♗b2 ♗g4 15.f3 ♗e6 16.0-0 ♗xc4 17.♖fd1 ♕c7.

14...a6 15.c5 ♗d7!? 16.♗d3 ♘a4

This position requires practical tests. Black will win the c5 pawn, but White surely has compensation. Who is willing to try this?

SOS Prize for Shirov's Line

SOS-7, Chapter 5, p. 50

An important new idea in Shirov's Philidor (5.g4!) was demonstrated by Dutch talent Robin van Kampen in the 2010 Corus C tournament. It is this volume's well-deserving winner. Enjoy the tactics below!

□ **Robin van Kampen**
■ **Sjoerd Plukkel**
Wijk aan Zee 2010

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7

3...e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 is another way to reach the Philidor under investigation here. In this move order 4.g4, almost forcing 4...h6, is a very interesting option. See Chapter 8 by Willy Hendriks in this book!

4.♘f3 e5 5.g4

Shirov's astonishing idea as first played by him against Azmaiparashvili in 2003. Friso Nijboer reported on this line for SOS in the 7th volume.

5...♘xg4

The only way to refute a gambit is to accept it, however, it seems that this is also the way to lose quickly. For the alternatives to the pawn snatch see SOS-7.

6.♖g1 ♘gf6 7.♗e3!?

This is fairly new. On the highest level we could mention a rapid game by Mamedyarov from 2008. Of course Shirov always plays 7.♗c4 and this has almost exclusively been played so far.

7...c6 8.♕d2

White insists on postponing the development of the king's bishop, and he does so for a reason (or more than one actually).

Firstly, the bishop cannot be attacked by ...b5 or ...♘b6.

Secondly, the bishop might go to h3.

Thirdly, White will castle one move sooner – which may be useful for all sorts of tricks on the d-file. And finally, White might save a tempo: see the game!

8...♕c7

8...b5 9.a3 ♗b7 (9...a6 as played in Teran Alvarez-Strikovic, Seville 2009, spends a tempo on preventing any funny business on b5) 10.0-0-0 and now:

– 10...g6 11.♗h3 ♗e7 12.♗h6 a5 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♗g7 ♖g8 15.♕h6 ♕c7 16.♖xd7?! (correct was the prosaic 16.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 17.♕xh7 0-0-0 18.♗h6) 16...♘xd7 17.♕xh7 ♖xg7 18.♕xg7 ♗f6 19.♕h7 (White had presumably overlooked 19.♗xd7+ ♔e7!, when Black is OK. Although this would still have been the lesser evil) 19...♘f8 was slightly better for Black in Priyadharshan-Al Sayed, Subic Bay 2009.
– 10...♕a5 11.♔b1 b4 12.axb4 ♕xb4 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 (13...dxe5 14.♗h3 ♕e7 15.♗g5 with very strong pressure) 14.♘xe5 dxe5 15.♗h3 (15.f4!?) 15...♗e7? (15...♕e7) 16.♗d7+ ♘xd7 17.♕xd7+ ♔f8

Until so far the rapid game Mamedyarov-Agrest, Ajaccio 2008. Mamedyarov won fairly quickly after the sober 18.♕c7. He could have won forcefully with the lovely: 18.♖xg7!! ♖d8 (18...♔xg7 19.♖g1++–) 19.♗h6!! ♖xd7 20.♖g8+ ♔xg8 21.♖g1+ ♗g5 22.♖xg5 mate!

9.0-0-0 b5?

Very logical, but wrong, as Van Kampen convincingly demonstrates.

10.dxe5!

The right moment to open the position.

10...♘xe5

After 10...dxe5 11.♗xb5! ♘xe4? (11...cxb5 12.♘xb5 ♕c4 13.♕a5 favours White) 12.♘xe4 cxb5

White again has a spectacular rook sacrifice on g7: 13.♖xg7! (13.♘d6+? ♗xd6 14.♕xd6 ♕xd6 15.♖xd6 was slightly better for Black in Fernandez Andrade-Baltar Iglesias, Ourense 2007) 13...♗xg7 (13...♕c6 14.♘xe5 ♕xe4 15.♖g5!+–) 14.♘d6+ ♔f8 15.♕d5+– and White just wins. Apparently, ♖xg7 is a standard sac in this line. Or is it the only logical consequence of 5.g4 ♘xg4 6.♖g1?

11.♘xe5 dxe5

12.♗xb5!

Right, so White has saved a tempo: the bishop is 'developed' to b5 in one go!

12...♗e6

Black cannot accept this very Greek gift: 12...cxb5 13.♘xb5 just wins: 13...♕e7 14.♕c3,

13.♗a4

Now 14.♘d5 is an unpleasant threat, so Black pins the knight, but this means allowing ♖xg7 (this time not even a sac!).

13...♗b4

13...♘d7 was probably best, but material is equal again and White has everything developed. It's not difficult to decide on which side you should put your money.

14.♖xg7 ♘xe4

The point, Black at least inflicts some damage on White's queenside structure. Van Kampen has accurately calculated that his king is safe enough though.

15.♕d3 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♗f8

16...♗a3+ 17.♔b1 and White always has ♗b3, which suffices.

17.♖xh7! Simple but effective. **17...♖xh7 18.♕xh7 ♗xa2?** 18...♖d8 was best, but White is a passed pawn ahead.

19.♕h8 Now it's all over as Black cannot defend against ♗c5 or ♗h6 without letting go of c6. **19...♖b8** Or 19...♗e6 20.♗c5 winning.

20.♗xc6+ ♔e7 Nothing is changed by 20...♕xc6 21.♕xe5+ ♗e6 22.♕xb8+. **21.♗g5+ ♔e6 22.♕f6** checkmate!

CHAPTER 2

Dimitri Reinderman

Trompowsky: the Cinema Variation

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6

I often go to the cinema. One time, not too long ago, the movie hadn't started yet and they showed some trailers. Now I do like to see trailers, but not when I've seen them ten times already (the disadvantage of going to the cinema too often!), so my mind started wandering, calculating strange variations from the starting position. This is something I do more often when I am bored. Now, you dear reader might think that I am some kind of Ivanchuk, not quite in touch with the reality of the world. And, well, maybe you're right!

Anyway, I calculated 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.♘d2 g5 5.♗e5 ♘xe5 6.♘xe4 ♘c4 7.♘xg5 ♘xb2 8.♕c1 and then first variations with 8...♘c4 9.♕f4 f6, which looked a bit suspicious, but then I found 8...♗h6 and this looked fine. By this time the movie started, but I remembered the variation, so, when I came home, I started checking whether my fantasy could survive the hard reality of Rybka. And to my surprise it did! And what is more, there were many more interesting variations, like 4.f3 e5!?.

My database only gives 48 games with 3...♘c6, including a lot of games by unrateds, lowly rateds, and games where Black plays secondary continuations. So in writing this article, I mainly had to trust on my own (computer checked) analysis. As the above fantasy variation illustrates, one of

the ideas of 3...♘c6 is to play ...g5. After 3...g5 White might play 4.♗e5, but he probably won't do this when knight takes bishop is possible. Another idea is the move ...e5, as a (probably temporary) sacrifice in the style of the Budapest Gambit (or simply as a good answer to 4.d5). And Black develops, so it's not out of the question to continue with moves like ...d5 and continue in Chigorin Defence style.

I will show you examples of how to continue after 4.♘d2, 4.f3 and other moves, like 4.e3 and 4.♘f3, but first a warning. Often with an SOS you not only have the advantage of surprise, but also of knowledge. You play your (SOS) book moves, while your opponent has to think on his/her own. But if you intend to play 3...♘c6, you have to realize that you will probably be out of book fairly quickly too. The variations that I will give are plausible continuations, but there are many alternatives that I don't cover. It is also important to realize that variations like 3...♘c6 4.♘d2 g5 will give unusual positions, which means that both players will have to make concrete decisions early on (instead of just developing their pieces and/or rely on their opening knowledge), and so that time-trouble will be very likely. If your clock handling is bad, this is not a good variation for you. The reverse holds as well: if your opponent's clock handling is bad, 3...♘c6 will bring him very near to the abyss.

Variation I – 4.♘d2

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.♘d2 g5!?

According to my database, this move has never been played. While I don't think that this move is better than the normal 4...♘xd2, it's certainly more entertaining, and a good choice if you want to avoid a draw. If you take on d2 that is not so easy, for example 5.♕xd2 d5 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♘f3 e6 8.♗b5 ♗d6 9.♘e5 ♗xe5 10.♗xe5 0-0 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 and now you will be happy not to play under the Sofia Rules...

After 4...g5, White immediately has some problems to solve. So many possibilities, what to choose?

5.♗e5

● 5.♘xe4 gxf4 6.♕d2 (after most other moves Black will also play 6...d5. For 6.d5 ♘e5 see 5.d5) 6...d5 7.♘c3 ♗h6 (the only good move to defend the pawn, but defending it is not essential! For example 7...h5!? 8.♕xf4!? ♗h6 9.♕g3 ♘xd4 10.♕e5 ♘xc2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♕xh8+ ♗f8 is a very interesting position. Difficult to evaluate also, but probably having an unsafe king is worse than having a knight in the corner) 8.g3 (again the most forcing move)

8...♗f5!? (8...♗g7) 9.gxf4 (9.♘f3 ♗e4!? 10.♗g2 e6 11.gxf4 ♖g8 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘g5 ♗xg5 14.fxg5 f5 15.h4 ♕xd4 is equal, but what happens when White is materialistic?) 9...e5! 10.dxe5 d4 11.♘a4 (11.♗g2 is an interesting counter-sacrifice) 11...♗e4 (or 11...♕h4, if you prefer to win back your pawns quickly) 12.♘f3 ♕e7 13.b3 (13...b5 was a threat) 13...0-0-0 14.♘b2 ♘xe5, and Black will win an exchange. Okay, this variation probably won't happen in a real game, but one can dream!

● 5.d5 gxf4 6.♘xe4 ♘e5 7.g3 (with this move White hopes that a more compact pawn structure will compensate for Black's pair of bishops)

7...c6!? (7...fxg3 8.hxg3 c6 is fine, but sacrificing pawns is fun!) 8.gxf4 ♘g6 9.e3 ♕b6 (9...♕a5+ is also good) 10.♖b1 (a Trompowsky player is used to sacrifice b2, but in this position Black would really enjoy eating this pawn) 10...♕b4+ 11.♘c3 ♗g7 12.♘f3 (12.♘e2 ♘h4! 13.♗h3 d6 14.♗xc8 ♖xc8 with compensation) 12...♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2 cxd5. Suddenly Black is a pawn up! And now White is the one with compensation.

● 5.♗xc7 ♘xf2 6.♗xd8 ♘xd1 7.♖xd1 ♔xd8. This endgame is about equal, but not drawish: both sides have their advantages.

● 5.♗e3 ♘xd2 6.♕xd2 ♗g7 7.c3 h6 8.0-0-0 ♘a5!? 9.b3 d5, with again an original and about equal position.

● 5.♗xg5!? (yes, this is possible!) 5...♘xg5 6.d5 h5 (6...♘b8 7.h4 and White wins back the piece) 7.h4 ♘h7 8.dxc6 bxc6, and with two bishops and a lot of central pawns Black can be happy.

● 5.♗g3?! ♘xg3 6.hxg3 ♘xd4 wins a pawn, when White doesn't have enough compensation.

5...♘xe5 6.♘xe4

After 6.dxe5 ♘c5 a possible continuation is 7.e3 ♗g7 8.♕h5 ♗xe5 9.0-0-0 e6 10.h4 d5 11.hxg5 ♗g7, with again an interesting position, where chances are about equal.

6...♘c4

Here the computer comes with the unbelievable 6...♘c6. Can't White just take the pawn? But it thinks the position is equal after 7.♘xg5 e5 8.♘5f3 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♗g7 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.c3 ♖b8 12.♕c2 ♕f6. White looks solid here, but it's not so easy to develop, so perhaps Black does have full compensation for the pawn. The same goes for 7.d5 ♘e5 8.♘xg5 c6 9.dxc6 bxc6.

Anyway, 6...♘c4 is the main line of my Cinema Variation.

7.♘xg5

Can White claim to be better after 7.e3 ♘xb2 8.♕b1 ♘c4!? 9.♗xc4 d5 10.♗d3 dxe4 11.♗xe4 c6? The g5 pawn looks out of

place, but every disadvantage has an advantage, and perhaps Black can continue as if ...g5 is part of a plan: 12.♘e2 h5!? 13.0-0 h4.

7...♘xb2

There are other options here, but this must be the best move.

8.♕c1

White has a trick here: 8.♕d2 h6 9.♘xf7!? ♔xf7 10.♕b4, but after 10...c5! 11.♕xb2 ♕a5+ 12.♔d1 cxd4 Black has two bishops, the centre, open files, a safer king; in short, everything he dreams of!

8...♘c4

As said in the introduction, 8...♗h6 is fine for Black, but 8...♘c4 actually works!

9.♕f4?!

9.e4 d5 10.♗xc4 dxc4 is better, and then for example 11.♘e2 ♗h6 12.♕f4 f6 13.♕f3, hoping for 13...♗xg5 14.h4, though a brave black soul plays this anyway, otherwise 13...0-0 14.♘h3 e5 is fine. Some weaknesses, but two bishops can do a lot.

9...♘d6!

Here Black is already better, according to the computer, but it's not so easy to explain why. Well, I can make an educated guess: White's dark squares are weak, especially since there is no bishop to cover them, and ♕a5(+) and ♗h6 are potentially annoying moves.

Let's try both a forcing, and a quiet, variation for White:

– 10.e4 c6 11.e5 ♕a5+ 12.♔d1 h6 13.♘5f3 ♘b5 14.♗xb5 ♕xb5 sees Black undeveloped, but his bishops will be strong in the future.

– 10.c3 c6 11.♘e4 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 ♕a5 13.♕c2 c5 14.e3 b6 15.♗e2 cxd4 16.exd4 ♗b7 17.♗f3 ♗d5 and White still has some problems to solve.

Okay computer, I might be wrong, but I believe you. It really seems that the Cinema Variation is good for Black!

Variation II – 4.f3

□ **Wolfgang Gerstner**
■ **Stephan Giemsa**
Germany Bundesliga 1989/90

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.f3

4...e5!?

Sharp but risky. The alternative is 4...♘f6 5.e4 d6 6.♗b5 (6.♗c4 e5 7.dxe5 ♘h5 8.♗e3 ♘xe5 or 6.♗e3 g6 should suit KI/Pirc players) 6...a6 7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.♘e2 ♖b8 9.b3 e6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.c4 ♘d7 12.♘bc3 c5 13.d5 e5 14.♗e3 ♗g5 15.♕d2 h6 and a draw was agreed in Brumen-Zaja, Zagreb 2007.

Not good is 4...g5 5.♗c1, since Black will lose pawn g5.

5.dxe5

The only good move; White should try to keep his dark-squared bishop.

5...g5

Black chases the bishop to a square where it doesn't defend e5 and gains the possibility of fianchettoing with tempo.

There is a disadvantage too, of course: 5...g5 gives White an object to attack with h4.

6.♗e3

White will want to keep his bishop, but then he either has to block his e-pawn, or undevelop with 6.♗c1. After 6...♘c5 7.e4 there are two different set-ups for Black:

– 7...♗g7 8.♗e3 ♘e6 9.♘c3 ♗xe5 10.♘ge2 d6 11.♕d2 ♗d7 12.0-0-0 ♕f6 is Offinger-Härtig, Germany 2006/07, but now 13.h4! is strong.

– But Black can consider neglecting his development and leave the bishop on f8 to defend d6: 7...♘xe5 8.♘c3 d6 9.♗e3 ♘e6 10.♕d2 c6 11.0-0-0 b5!?, with counterchances, but it's very provocative!

6...♘c5

7.♕d2

This is (in the few games with this position) the most popular move.

Hodgson, in *Secrets of the Trompowsky*, gives as the main line:

– 7.♕c1 (so as not to be bothered by ...♘c4) 7...♘e6 8.h4 ♘xe5 9.hxg5 d5 10.♗f2 ♗g7 11.c3 ♕e7 12.♕d2 c6 13.♘a3 ♘xg5 14.♗h4 f6 15.0-0-0 ♗f5 16.e4 dxe4 17.f4 with advantage for White in Helbig-Seyb, Germany 1993/94. However, chances were about equal till Black slipped up with 15...♗f5.

– 7.h4 is a forcing move: 7...g4 (7...gxh4 8.♘c3 ♘xe5 9.♗d4 f6 10.f4 ♘f7 11.♕d2 is good for White) 8.♘c3 ♘xe5 9.♕d4 (9.♗d4 f6 10.f4 is less convincing now, since after 10...♘c6 11.e3 White doesn't threaten ♕h5+) 9...f6 10.0-0-0 c6 11.f4 ♘f7, and it's difficult to label positions like this, but there is no obvious advantage for one side (though perhaps there is an obvious disadvantage for both sides...).

– 7.♕d5 must be mentioned, because it hangs on to the pawn. But it doesn't worry Black: 7...♕e7 8.h4 (otherwise Black will just take on e5) 8...♘b4 9.♕xc5 (9.♕d2 ♕xe5 attacks b2 and e3!) 9...♕xc5 10.♗xc5 ♗xc5 11.♔d2 d6 with good compensation for the pawn.

7...♘e6 8.♗f2

8...♗g7

Putting the bishop here can't be too bad, but there is an alternative: 8...♘xe5 9.♘c3 c6 10.e4 b5!?. Who needs development when you can attack?

9.♘c3 ♗xe5

9...♘xe5 10.e4 d6 11.0-0-0 h5 12.h4 g4 13.♗e3 was played in Multhauf-Schirmer, e-mail 2001, but it's not easy to find a safe place for the black king here.

10.e4 d6 11.♗c4 ♗d7 12.♘ge2

White's position is easier to play here, especially since Black has difficulties with his king. With the pawn on g6 short castling would be fine, but now it would be asking for 'it' (which in this case is a white attack). The upside of the pawn on g5 is heightened control of the dark squares. It's a bit similar to the variation of the Advanced Dragon where Black plays ...g5, ...h5-h4 and keeps the king in the middle, hoping to get a nice blockade. But here White can try to prepare g3 and f4. Still, Black has a very playable position. However, he shouldn't play

12...♖b8?

Black hopes to get b5 in, but gives up on castling queenside. A normal move here would be 12...♕f6, and after 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♔b1 ♕g7 15.g3 ♔b8 16.f4 ♗f6 there is no dark square blockade anymore, but the battery on the long diagonal is nice.

13.♗e3

After 13.h4 h6 14.0-0-0 ♕f6 15.♗e3 the main difference with the variation above is that the king is stuck in the middle (and the black rooks are not connected). This means White is clearly better.

13...♖g8 14.♖b1

Planning 15.♖g1 perhaps? Anyway, there was no reason to be afraid of a black attack: 14.0-0-0 a6 15.h4 h6 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.♘d5 b5 18.♗d3 ♘e7 19.g3 and White will be the one attacking.

14...a6 15.♘d5 b5 16.♗b3 ♘e7 17.c3 ♘g6 18.g3 c6 19.♘b4

19...♖a8

In chess, as in life, one must not be afraid to admit one's mistakes. But in this case there was no concrete need, since after 19...c5 White won't take on a6.

20.♖f1 ♘ef4?

It's true that White was threatening to win a piece, and Black gets some counterchances after giving up a piece voluntarily. But Black can get the same counterchances while keeping his piece: 20...c5 21.♘d5 ♗g7 22.f4 gxf4 23.gxf4 c4 24.♗c2 ♘c5, and while White is better, with both kings feeling insecure anything can happen.

21.gxf4 gxf4 22.♗f2 ♘h4 23.♘g1 ♖g2 24.♘d3 ♖xh2 25.♘xe5 dxe5 26.♕d6 ♘g2+ 26...♕e7 is best, but not enough. **27.♔e2 f6 28.♖fd1 ♘e3 29.♗e6** Winning more material. **29...♘xd1 30.♖xd1 ♖a7 31.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 32.♕e6+ ♕e7 33.♕g8+** Black resigned.

Variation III – 4.e3 and others

□ **Alef Boer**
■ **Rob Bertholee**
Groningen 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 ♘c6 4.e3

Hodgson writes: 'I quite like the look of the solid 4.e3 followed by 5.♗d3, but then I am getting rather old!'

– 4.♘f3 is also a normal move, and there have been some grandmaster games with it: 4...e6 5.♘bd2 d5 6.♘xe4 (6.c3 ♗d6 7.e3 0-0 8.♗d3 f5= Kovacevic-Planinec, Zagreb 1975) 6...dxe4 7.♘e5 ♘e7 (7...♗d6 8.e3 0-0 9.♗g3 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♕g5 11.♕d2 ♘xe5 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 13.♕c3 e5= Hort-Planinec, Ljubljana 1975) 8.e3 f6 9.♘c4 ♘d5 10.♗g3 ♗d7 11.♘d2 f5 12.c4 ♘f6 13.♗e2 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5, with an equal position in Jakab-Beliavsky, Hungary 2003.

– As explained before, Black is fine after 4.d5 e5.

4...d6

Of course 4...d5 is also possible, as is the wild 4...g5!? 5.♗g3 h5.

5.♗d3 e5 6.♗xe4 exf4 7.♗xc6+ bxc6 8.exf4

We have a familiar theme: Black has two bishops, but for a price, in this case a pawn.

8...♗a6 9.♕f3 d5 10.♘e2 ♖b8 11.b3 ♗d6 12.0-0 0-0

The bishops are clearly more active than White's knights, so Black's compensation is enough.

13.♖e1 ♖e8 14.♘d2 ♕e7 15.♔f1?!

♕f6 16.c4 ♗b4 Winning back a pawn.

17.♖ed1 ♗xd2 18.♖xd2 dxc4 19.♔g1 cxb3

20.♘c3? b2

Now Black even is a pawn up.

21.♖b1 ♖b4 22.h3 ♖eb8 23.♕e3 g6 24.♘d1 c5? 25.dxc5 h5 26.♕e5 ♕xf4 27.♕xf4 ♖xf4 28.♖bxb2 ♖xb2 29.♘xb2 ♖e4

Black lost the pawn, but is still a bit better.

30.♔h2 ♖e5 31.♖d8+ ♔g7 32.♖a8 ♖xc5 33.♖xa7 ♗e2 34.a4 ♖c2 35.♖b7 ♗a6 36.♖a7 ♗e2 37.♖b7 ♔f6 38.a5 h4 39.♘a4 ♖c4 40.♘b2 ♖c2 41.♘a4 ♗a6 42.♖b4 ♔e5 43.♖xh4 c5 44.♖h7 ♗b5 45.♘xc5 ♖xc5 46.♖xf7 ♗c4

This ending should be a draw, but eventually White lost rook-bishop against rook.

47.♖a7 ♗d5 48.♔g3 ♖c3+ 49.f3 ♖c2 50.♖g7 ♔f5 51.a6 ♖a2 52.a7 ♗c4 53.♔h4 ♔f6 54.♖d7 ♗e6 55.♖c7 ♗d5 56.♖d7 g5+ 57.♔g3 ♗c4 58.h4 ♗f1 59.hxg5+ ♔xg5 60.♖d5+ ♔f6 61.♖d2 ♖xa7 62.♔f2 ♗c4 63.g4 ♗e6 64.♖d3 ♔e5 65.♔g3 ♖a1 66.♖e3+ ♔f6 67.♖c3 ♗d5 68.♖c5 ♔e5 69.f4+ ♔e4 70.f5 ♖g1+ 71.♔h3 ♔f3 72.♖c3+ ♔f4 73.♔h4 ♖xg4+ 74.♔h5 ♔xf5 75.♖c5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

Alekhine: Hector's Way

Let's play 7.♕f3!?

In my opinion, to achieve a theoretical opening advantage against the Alekhine the correct way to proceed is 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3, the so-called Modern Variation.

However, if the Vienna or the Four Knights Opening (remember the Gunsberg Variation 4.a3?) is on your repertoire in the Open Games, then 2.♘c3 is an excellent choice against the Alekhine. Apart from 2...e5 Black may also play 2...d6 to enter the Pirc (while 3.f4 c5 is a Sicilian Grand Prix Attack), but Alekhine players will usually opt for 2...d5 to try and direct the course of play. Here you can surprise your opponent with Jonny Hector's favourite weapon.

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4

Theoretical works on the Alekhine often argue that this leads to an equal ending, but this SOS will prove them wrong! Here 3...♘fd7 might lead to a French Defence – certainly not your opponent's cup of tea or he would have gone for 1...e6 in the first place. More distinctive is 3...♘c4, but this is fairly dubious after 4.♘ce2!. After the text both sides grab some material with

4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2

Combined with White's next move this is the SOS way to combat this line. The equal ending that I was referring to above arises after 6.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 7.♗xd2 ♗xg7 8.0-0-0 ♘c6.

6...♗xg7 7.♕f3!?

Attaboy! This is the way to play! White pre-

pares to castle queenside. He is willing to exchange the dark-squared bishops via square c3. Black's queen might get into trouble following a vis-à-vis with the rook along the d-file. And last but not least, Black's king is a little vulnerable – he usually castles kingside, but with the g-pawn missing this is not entirely safe. All this sounds almost too good to be true. Well, if I would have to mention a downside: it is that White has kept pawn b2 hanging. However, we all know about grabbing on b2, don't we? Let's look at some illustrative games.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Matej Grujic**
Limhamn 1998

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♕d6

Black is preparing ...♕f6. The fact that Black is taking so much trouble to exchange queens should strengthen us in the idea that 7.♕f3 is correct – why ease Black's task with 6.♕xd2?

I like the text better than 7...♕d4, when Hector-Blees, Kecskemet 1987, went 8.♗c3 ♕g4 9.♗xg7 ♕xg7 10.0-0-0 when White is slightly better. After 10...♘c6 11.♕f4 (11.♕g3) 11...e5 12.♕h4 0-0, Hector went all-out with 13.♖d3!? ♗f5 14.♖g3 ♗g6 15.f4. Now 15...exf4 16.♕xf4 ♕e5 would have been better than the game continuation 15...f5? 16.♘f3 with advantage.

8.0-0-0

Also worthy of attention is 8.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3 ♖g8 10.♗d3!? ♕c6!? 11.♕d2! ♕xg2 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 (12...♕xh1?? 13.♗e4+–) 13.♘e2 ♕g5 (13...♕xf2 14.♖hg1!?) 14.f4 ♕c5 15.♖hg1 and White has a dangerous attack for only one pawn.

After 8.♗c3 e5 White has 9.♖d1! ♕f6 10.♕xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♗b5 with a slight edge.

8...♘c6

8...♕f6 is an important move, but White has several ways to claim an edge.

The ending after 9.♕xf6 ♗xf6 10.♗f4 is slightly better for White. White can also avoid the exchange of queens for the moment with 9.♕a3 ♕d6 10.♗b5+!? ♗d7 (10...c6?! 11.♕xd6 exd6 12.♗d3) 11.♕b3 ♗xb5 12.♕xb5+ ♕c6 13.♕e2!? ♕b6 14.c3 ♘d7 15.♘h3 with an edge, Hector-Cadei, Geneva 1990.

9.♗c3 ♕h6+ 10.♔b1 0-0

There is something to be said for 10...♗d7 in order to castle queenside.

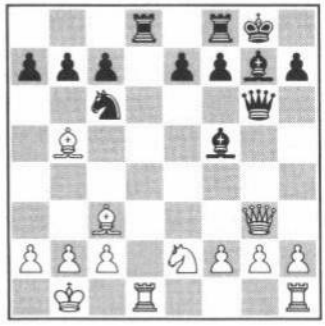
At first sight it looks as if White can strike immediately with 11.♖xd7.

However, after 11...♗xc3 (not 11...♔xd7? 12.♕g4+) White has nothing better but to return to d1, since 12.♖xc7 ♕d2! draws. And 12.♖d1 ♗g7 13.♗b5 0-0 was OK for Black in K.Lutz-Diaz, Germany 1989.

After 11.♗c4 ♖f8 (11...0-0-0! is correct) is worse because of 12.♖xd7! ♗xc3 (12...♔xd7 13.♕g4+ ♔e8 14.♗xg7) 13.♖xc7 ♕d6 14.♖xc6 ♕xc6 15.♕xc3 ♕xg2 16.♗b5+ ♔d8 17.♕h3! with a winning position.

11.♕g3 11.♗b5!? is probably more accurate. **11...♗f5 12.♗b5 ♖ad8** 12...♕g6 13.♕xg6 hxg6 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♘e2 is quite similar to the game.

13.♘e2 ♕g6



The best move, but Hector now goes for a slightly better ending which is unpleasant to defend. **14.♕xg6 hxg6 15.♗xg7 ♔xg7 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♘d4** A knight is strong versus a fractured pawn structure such as Black has here on the queenside. **17...♖d6 18.♔c1** 18.♘xf5+ gxf5 is nothing special. **18...♔f6 19.♖he1 e5 20.♘b3! ♖d5 21.c4 ♖d6** This loses time. Correct was 21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♖h8 23.h3 ♖h4 24.♘a5 ♖e4 with enough activity for the structural weaknesses on the queenside. **22.♘a5 ♖h8 23.h3 ♖h4 24.b3 ♗d7?! 25.♘b7! ♖dd4 26.♘c5 ♗e6 27.♘d3 ♖h5 28.♘b4**

Hector sure likes to dance around with his knight. After a few inaccuracies Black's position has become very unpleasant. White won on move 61.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Edvins Kengis**
Haninge 1992

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♘c6 8.♗b5

Equally good is 8.0-0-0 ♕d6 9.♗c3 ♕h6+ 10.♔b1 which has occurred a few times in practice and is pleasant for White. The same holds for 8...♗d7 9.♗c3.

8...♕d6

Kengis also puts the queen on d6. Other options include:

- 8...0-0 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.♗c3

White is playing for a positional advantage. For example: 10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♕d5 12.♖d1! ♕e4+ (12...♕xg2 13.♖d3! is the point, White is much better after 13...♗g4 14.♖g3 ♕e4+ 15.♔f1 f5 16.f3) 13.♘e2 ♗a6 14.♖d2 ♖ad8 15.f3 ♕e6 16.♔f2 Hector-Daillet, Cannes 1989. White's main advantage lies in the fact that he has two pawn groups, while Black has four. Hector won fairly effortlessly.

● 8...♗d7 9.♗c3 (9.0-0-0) 9...♘d4 10.♗xd4! ♗xd4 11.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 Bröhl-Klotz, Porz 1994/95. Now White should have played 12.0-0-0, with an edge.

● If Black did not take on b2 on the previous move then it is hard to believe that he will do so now: 8...♗xb2 9.♖b1 ♗f6 10.♘e2 ♕d6 11.0-0 provides sufficient compensation, as does 9.♖d1 ♕d6 10.♘e2.

9.♗c3 0-0 10.♗xc6

Again Hector is playing for knight versus bishop and fractured pawn structure. Black can only survive such positions if he manages to create dynamic counterplay.

10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 bxc6 12.♘e2 ♗a6 13.♖d1 ♕e6

14.♕e3!

This more or less forces the queens off, when despite the isolated pawn on e3 White keeps his endgame edge.

14...♕xe3

The tactical point was 14...♕xa2? 15.♕g3+! ♔h8 16.♕c3+ f6 17.b3!, and with neat geometrical play White will win material (either the queen or the bishop on a6).

15.fxe3 ♖fd8 16.♖xd8+ Keeping it very simple. Black has counterplay after 16.♔f2 ♖d5. **16...♖xd8 17.♖f1**

I am not going to make a detailed analysis of this ending. Hector makes the technical phase look easy, and please don't forget that his opponent in this game is a strong grandmaster. **17...e5 18.♖f5 ♖e8** Now note the next rook manoeuvre to the queenside: **19.♖g5+** Gaining a tempo. **19...♔f8 20.♖h5 ♔g7 21.♖h4! ♖b8 22.b3 ♗c8** With such a queenside the rook ending after 22...♗xe2 23.♔xe2 is also unattractive. In a way this was preferable, though, as the knight is superior to the bishop. **23.♖a4 a6**

The time has come for the knight to seek greener pastures: **24.♘c1 f6 25.♘d3 ♖b5 26.♖c4 ♖b6 27.♘c5 ♔f7**

And the first pawn drops off: **28.♘a4! ♖b7 29.♖xc6 ♖a7 30.♘c5** Domination. Kengis resigned on move 49.

□ **Yury Balashov**
■ **Georgy Timoshenko**
Moscow 1989

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3 ♗xb2

This is the acid test. White has left pawn b2 hanging in his desire to keep the queens on. Not only does Black actually win a pawn, he also destroys White's hopes of castling queenside. Yet, 7...♗xb2 is not too popular in practice and this is not only because of the proverbial misdemeanour of grabbing b2. White gains time to develop a serious initiative and, while his own king can still castle kingside, his opponent's king will be stuck in the middle for some time to come.

8.♖d1

Clearly the most popular move. Of course the rook has to be placed on d1 and not on b1. Yet, curiously White is not obliged to move the rook, but he can interpolate 8.♗c4 with the threat of mate. This is actually a serious option which you might well find worth investigating.

8...♕d6

However, as we are accustomed to by now, there are two queen moves to investigate. Fifteen years earlier Balashov had encountered **8...♕d4** versus Alburt, and we have to study this into some detail, 9.♘e2:

– 9...♕f6?! 10.♕b3 ♗e5 11.f4! ♗d6 12.♗c3 e5 13.♖d5! ♕h4+?! (13...♕h6) 14.g3 ♕e7 15.fxe5 ♗c5 and White won in E.Heinemann-Engel, Schöppenstedt 1993, following 16.♘f4. Immediately decisive would have been 16.♕b5+! ♘d7 17.e6! fxe6 18.♖xc5.

– 9...♕c4?! 10.♘f4 ♕xa2?? is too greedy. White wins after 11.♘d5 ♗e5 12.♗c3 ♘c6 13.♗xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xc7+ ♔f8 15.♕c3 1-0, Hennings-Birnbaum, Germany 1995.

– 9...♕g4 (there is no real substitute for this forcing sequence) 10.♕b3

So far so good. White is better developed, but Black still has his pawn. He now has to make up his mind where to move the bishop to: e5, f6, or g7?

First let's move it to e5: **10...♗e5** can be met by 11.♗c3 when 11...♗xc3+ (you should study the consequences of 11...♕e6 and 11...♕g7) 12.♕xc3 0-0

suddenly loses after 13.♖d3!.

Secondly, there is **10...♗g7**.

Now 11.♗c3? ♘c6 12.♖d3 ♗xc3+ 13.♕xc3 ♕b4∓ is an old analysis by Bronstein and Lepeshkin. However, in practice White has fared better with 11.♘f4.

Finally, there is Alburt's choice of **10...♗f6** 11.♘f4:

– 11...♖g8 12.♗e2 ♕f5 13.0-0 ♗e5 14.♕d5?! (14.♗d3) 14...♗xf4 15.♗b5+ (15.♗xf4) 15...♔f8 16.♕xf5 ♗xf5 17.♗xf4 ♘c6 18.c3 was about equal in Van Haastert-Kuiper, Netherlands tt 1994/95.

– 11...♘c6 12.♗e2 ♕f5 13.♘d5 ♗e5 14.♗c3 ♖g8 15.f4!? (15.♗xe5 ♕xe5 16.f4) 15...e6 (15...♗d6 16.0-0 ♗d7) 16.0-0! exd5 17.fxe5 Balashov-Alburt, Leningrad ch-URS 1974. White is much better now, although Alburt managed to escape quite miraculously with a draw.

9.♗c4 Again this move, which shows how serious we should take it on the previous move as well.

9...♗f6

This looks like the best move.

After 9...♕g6 10.♘e2 ♘c6 11.♕b3 ♗e5 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♘f4 White has compensation, Nozdrachev-Ivanov, Tula 2004.

After 9...♕f6 10.♕b3 ♗e6? (10...♗e5 11.♘f3) White should play 11.♕xb7 0-0 12.♕xa8 ♗xc4 13.♕e4±, rather than 11.♘e2 ♗xc4 12.♕xc4 ♕c6!, De Sio-Fucito, Napoli 1994.

10.♘e2 ♘c6 11.♗c3?! ♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♕b4

Timoshenko manages to trade queens while keeping the pawn. Curiously, White still has some compensation. His edge in development remains unpleasant.

12...♕e5 was also playable.

13.♗b5!? ♕xc3+ 14.♘xc3 ♗d7

So as not to allow ♗xc6, but this is passive. Perhaps just 14...♗e6 and Black is OK.

15.♘d5 ♖c8

Not 15...0-0-0? 16.♗xc6 ♗xc6 17.♘xe7+ ♔b8 18.♘xc6+ bxc6 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♔e2 and White is a pawn up on the kingside.

16.0-0 ♘b8

This is too passive. 16...a6 was correct, when Black is slightly better.

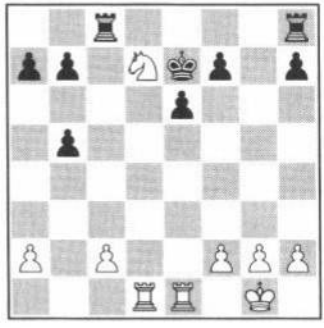
17.♖fe1! e6

Probably Timoshenko had missed 17...♗xb5 18.♘xe7 and wins.

18.♘f6+ ♔e7 19.♘xd7

White wins a piece, but there are considerable technical difficulties ahead.

19...c6 20.♘xb8 cxb5 21.♘d7



21...f6?

Trapping the knight, but in the end the beast cannot be won. Stronger was 21...♖hd8 22.♘e5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♖xc2 24.♖a1±.

22.♖e3 ♖hg8

Or 22...♖xc2 23.♖g3 ♔f7 (23...♖xa2 24.♖g7++−; 23...e5) 24.♖f3!.

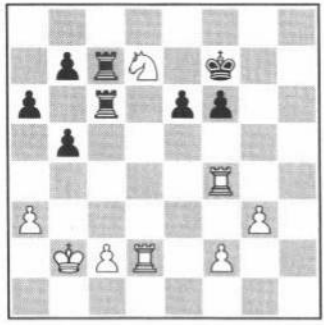
23.♖h3! ♖g7 24.♖a3 a6

The point of Balashov's rook manoeuvre was 24...♖c7 25.♖xa7 ♖xd7? 26.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 27.♖xb7+.

25.♖d2 Now Balashov has more or less consolidated his position. White won after **25...♖c7 26.♖ad3 ♖g5 27.a3 h5 28.g3 h4 29.♔g2 hxg3 30.hxg3 ♖h5 31.♖d4 ♖g5 32.♔f1**

The start of a plan to defend pawn c2 (his weakness) with the king, to free the rook.

32...♖h5 33.♔e2 ♖g5 34.♔d1 ♖h5 35.♔c1 ♖g5 36.♔b2 ♖h5 37.♘b6! ♖hc5 38.♖h4 ♔f7 39.♘d7 ♖5c6 40.♖f4



And now the knight finally escapes from its cage. Black resigned.

CHAPTER 4

Alexander Finkel

The French à la Hector

Winawer: 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!?

The Winawer Variation is steadily gaining back the popularity it enjoyed some ten years ago, so we thought that offering you some sort of a getaway line might be quite handy.

It would be too pretentious to claim that our topic is equally dangerous for Black as the main line (4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3), and I certainly do not purport to do so. However, considering the effort required to master this SOS line as White (little effort is required), the character of the emerging position, and the possible benefit of its future employment you will find studying this favourite of Hector's (in my sincere opinion) a very good time investment.

Of course things are not that simple. After 5.a3 another option for Black is capturing on c3, followed by 6...♘c6. However, since it is hardly possible to present both of these subjects seriously within the limits of a single article we shall cover it in the next issue of SOS.

As to the original idea to push g4 in this kind of positions, it belongs to no one else but the great Alexander Alekhine, who used it in a World Championship's match versus Euwe more than 70(!) years ago (the 7th match game of 1935, even though he played it after 6.♘xe4 ♘c6). Swedish GM Jonny Hector later took it up and employed it very successfully on numerous occasions. It is interesting to mention that Hector had shaped this line

almost exclusively, so all we need to do is to properly study some of his games.

Basically, the idea behind 6.g4 is to disrupt the regular development of Black's kingside. In the event that Black meets 6.g4 with 6...e5, the space gained on the kingside, and the restraining of Black's light-squared bishop promise White excellent chances in the endgames typically arising after 7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4. The drawback of 6.g4 is also quite clear, as Black may either push ...h5 immediately, or do so after the preliminary 6...e5 7.h3, getting a fair amount of counterplay in both cases. On the other hand, if Black refrains from pushing ...h5 White gets very comfortable play by simply developing his pieces.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Martin Voigt**
Germany Bundesliga 2001/02

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!?

Earlier Hector's approach had been more modest: 6.g3 ♗d7 7.♘xe4 ♗c6 8.f3 f5 9.♘d2 ♗f6 10.c3 e5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♗g2 ♕d3 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.a4 ♘e7 15.♘b3±, Hector-Vallejo Pons, Aceimar 1995.

6...e5!?

This natual move immediately attacking the pawn on g4 is Black's most popular reply to 6.g4, however both 6...h5 (which is explored in more detail in the game Hector-Karlsson below) and 6...♗d7 are hardly any worse (6...♗d7!? 7.♘g3 ♗c6 8.♗g2 e3 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♗xe3 ♘f6 11.h3 ♕d7 12.♕d3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 h5 14.g5 ♘d5 15.♘ge4 g6 was about equal in Turova-Matveeva, Istanbul 2003).

7.h3 exd4?!

I believe this move is an inaccuracy, after which White gets excellent chances in the forthcoming play.

Apparently Black should respond 7...h5!?, practically forcing White to sacrifice a pawn on g5: 8.g5 ♗xg5 9.♗xg5 ♕xg5 10.♖g1 ♕h4 11.♕d2! (11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.dxe5 ♘c6 13.♕d2 ♗e6∓)

It seems that White should have sufficient compensation to keep the balance, but I doubt he's got more than that: 11...♘e7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.dxe5 ♘bc6 14.♘d5?? (missing Black's defence, correct was 14.♕g5 with unclear play) 14...♘xd5 15.♕h6 ♗g4! 0-1, Libiszewski-Krivoshey, Salou 2008.

8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4

Despite its seeming simplicity, the arising position is not so easy for Black. White is better developed and this turns out to be a very important factor.

9...a6

9...♗f6?! 10.♘db5 ♗xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘f6 12.g5 ♘fd7 13.♘d5 ♔d8 14.♗f4±.

9...c6 was tested more often, but in all of the games Black experienced considerable difficulties:

– 10.♗e3 ♘f6 (10...h5 11.g5 g6? 12.♘xe4 ♘d7 13.0-0-0 ♘c5 – 13...♘b6 – 14.♘b5!+– cxb5 15.♘xc5 a6 16.♗g2, Hector-Hultin, Gothenburg 2004) 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.♗g2 ♘a6 13.♘xe4 ♘d5 14.♗d2 f5 15.gxf5 ♗xf5 16.♘xf5 ♖xf5 17.b4±, Hector-Larsson, Sweden 2005/06.

– 10.♗g2 ♘f6 11.g5 ♘d5 12.♘xc4 0-0 13.c4 ♘c7 14.0-0 ♘ba6 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.b4±, Hector-Djurhuus, Sweden 2005/06.

10.♗f4 c5 11.♘b3 ♘f6 12.0-0-0

White's idea is just to play ♗g2 and take on e4.

12...♗e6?!

After this careless move Black finds himself under severe pressure. It was necessary to trade a couple of minor pieces on e4, which would've allowed Black to build a solid defensive set-up.

12...b6!? 13.♗g2 ♗b7 14.♖he1 0-0 15.♘xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♘xe4 17.♖xe4 ♘c6±.

13.♘a5! b5?!

13...b6 14.♘c4 ♘bd7 15.♘d6+ ♗xd6 16.♗xd6 h6 17.♗g2±.

14.♗g2 ♘bd7 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4

Despite the material balance Black's position is nearly lost, mainly because of the huge difference in the strength of minor pieces.

16...♖d8 17.♘b7! ♖c8 18.♘d6+ ♗xd6 19.♗xd6

Or 19.♖xd6!?, I guess it's just a matter of taste!

19...♘b8 20.♗b7 ♖d8 21.♗xc5 ♖d7 22.♗e4 ♔d8 23.f4

Black could've resigned at this stage, but he tries to escape an inevitable fiasco.

23...♔c8 24.f5 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♗d7 26.♗d4 f6 27.g5!

Creating another weakness.

27...♖e8 28.gxf6 gxf6 28...♖xe4 29.f7+–. **29.♗d3 ♖f8 30.♖g1 ♘c6 31.♗f2 ♘e5 32.♗e4 ♔c7 33.♗c5 ♖e8 34.♗f2 ♘c4 35.♖g4 ♖e7 36.b3 ♘d6?!** 36...♘e5. **37.♗g3 ♗c6 38.♗d3 ♗d5**

39.c4 bxc4 40.bxc4 ♖e3 41.♗xd6+ ♔xd6 42.♖d4
Black resigned.

□ **Igor-Alexandre Nataf**
■ **Sergey Shipov**
Montreal 2005

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4 e5 7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6!?
In case White chooses to trade the queens on d8 Black is the one to benefit comparing to the immediate capture on d4, since White fails to find a good square for the knight on e2.
9.♕xd8+?!
I believe White has more chances to fight for an advantage after 9.♕xe4!?: 9...♘f6 (9...f5!?) 10.♕g2 0-0 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c8 13.♘f4±, Hector-Heika, Hamburg 2005.
9...♗xd8 10.♗f4

10...h5!?
A useful move securing square f5 for one of Black's knights. However, Black may try to take over the initiative by means of the energetic 10...g5! 11.♗e3 h5 12.♘xe4 (12.gxh5 f5∓ is hardly an option on White's part) 12...hxg4 13.0-0-0 gxh3 14.♘xg5 ♗xg5 15.♗xg5 ♗g4∓, Hector-Sjödahl, Sweden 2004.
11.g5 ♘ge7 12.♘g3?!
It was better to suspend the capture on e4 in order to put a knight on f4: 12.0-0-0 ♘g6 13.♗e3 ♘ce7 14.♘xe4 ♘f5 15.♗d2 0-0 16.♘f4±.
12...♘g6 13.♗e3 ♘ce7 14.♘gxe4 0-0 15.0-0-0 ♘f5

Black's knights are perfectly placed on the kingside, completely neutralizing White's minimal development advantage.
16.♗c5
16.♗d2!?.
16...♖e8 17.♗c4 ♗e6
17...c6!? 18.♖he1 ♗e6 19.♗xe6 ♖xe6 20.♗xa7 ♘f4 21.♗e3 ♘xh3 22.♗d2 ♗c7∓.
18.♗xe6 ♖xe6 19.♖d5 ♘fe7 20.♖d2 c6! 21.♖d7
This move is more accurate than 21.♖hd1 (21...♘d5 22.♘xd5 ♖xe4 23.♘c3 ♖e8 24.♗e3 ♗a5∓), but maybe 21.f3 deserved attention, intending to retreat with the bishop to f2.
21...b6 22.♖hd1 ♘d5 23.♘xd5 ♖xe4 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♘f6+!
Much worse is 25.♘e7+ ♘xe7 26.♖xd8+ ♔h7 27.♗xe7 ♖xe7 28.♖d6 ♖e2 29.f4 ♖f2 30.♖xc6 ♖xf4 31.♖c7 ♔g6∓ and Black is better prepared for the pawn race.
25...gxf6 26.♖xd8+ ♔h7 27.♗e3 fxg5 28.♗xg5 ♘f4 29.f3?!
White should not have too many difficulties

to hold the endgame arising after 29.♗xf4 ♖xf4 30.♖d7 ♖xf2 31.♖xa7.

29...♖d4!∓

30.♖a8?

Missing an opportunity to keep the balance: 30.♖c8! ♘xh3 31.♗e3 ♖d6 32.♖c7 ♖f6 33.♖xa7 b5 34.♔d2 ♖xf3 35.b3.

Not 30.♖xd4? ♘e2+ 31.♔d2 ♘xd4 32.f4 ♔g6 and wins.

30...♘xh3 31.♗e3 ♖d7

Now Black is just a pawn up, so the rest is a matter of technique.

32.♖c8 f6!

32...c5 33.♖c6.

33.♖xc6 ♔g6 34.♖c4 ♘g5 35.♖f4

Better is 35.♖h4.

35...♖h7 36.♗d4 f5 37.♗e3 h4 38.♖c4 h3 39.♖c6+ ♔h5

White resigned.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Martin Heika**
Hamburg 2005

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4 e5

Interesting is 6...c5!?. Now play is unclear after 7.♘xe4 ♘f6 (7...cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♘xd4 a6 10.♗f4 f6 11.♗e3±) 8.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 9.dxc5 ♘d7 10.♗g2 0-0.

Stronger looks 7.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♗d7 9.b4 ♘f6 10.g5 ♘g4 11.♘xe4 ♗c6 12.♘2g3 and White is slightly better, Vavra-Nguyen Chi Minh, Prague 2009.

7.h3 exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6

9.♕xe4!

White's plan is just to play ♗d2, 0-0-0, ♕g2, ♘f4 and ♗d3, followed by the advance of the g-pawn.

9...♘f6

Black's main problem after this move is the development of the light-squared bishop. As a result Black fails to get sufficient counterplay against White's actions on the kingside.

Black is also in trouble after 9...f5?! 10.♕c4! ♗f6 11.g5!? ♗xg5 12.♗xg5 ♕xg5 13.♘b5. Perhaps 9...h5!?.

10.♕g2 0-0

10...♘e5 11.f4 ♘c4 12.♘g3 ♘d6 13.♗e3±.

11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♕c8?!

It was absolutely necessary to take the chance to trade the bishop, even though after 12...♗c4!? 13.♘g3 ♗xf1 14.♖hxf1 ♖e8 15.g5 ♘d7 16.♘f5 White is well in control.

13.♘f4 ♖d8 14.g5 ♘e8 15.♘cd5!

White is not satisfied with 15.♘xe6 ♕xe6 16.♗b5 ♗c5 17.♖he1 ♕f5 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♕xc6±.

15...♗d6 16.♘xe6 ♕xe6 17.♗c4 ♕f5 18.♗d3

18...♕d7 Or 18...♕e6 19.f4 ♗f8 20.c4±.
19.♕e4?! A minor inaccuracy, allowing Black to put up rather tough resistance. Better was 19.♗c3 ♘e7 (19...♗e5 20.♗xe5 ♘xe5 21.♘f6+ gxf6 22.gxf6+ ♔h8 23.♖hg1+−) 20.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 21.h4 c6 22.♖he1 ♕c7 23.♕e4 g6 24.♔b1±.
19...g6 20.♗c3 ♕e6 21.♕xe6 21.♘f6+ ♘xf6 22.♗xf6 ♖e8 23.♖he1±.
21...fxe6 22.♘e3
The endgame is also clearly better for White, but Black's defensive task would have definitely been more difficult had the queens stayed on the board. 22.♘f6+ ♘xf6 23.♗xf6 ♗e7 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7 25.♖he1 ♔f7±.
22...♗f4 22...♗e5!? 23.♗d2 ♘d6 24.♘g4 ♗g7. **23.h4 ♘e5 24.♗e2 ♘d6 25.♖d4! ♗xe3+ 26.fxe3 ♘c6 27.♖g4 ♘f5 28.♗f6 ♖d6 29.e4 ♘g7** 29...♘fd4 30.♗d1 e5 31.h5+−. **30.♖g3 ♖f8**

31.♖b3! b6 32.♖c3 ♖f7 33.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 34.♗xd1 White is just winning. **34...♘b8** 34...♘a5 35.♗g4 c5 36.b4 ♘b7 37.♖d3+−. **35.♗e5 ♘d7 36.♗xc7 ♘e8 37.♗g3 ♘c5 38.♖c4 ♖f1 39.b4 ♘a4 40.♗e5 b5 41.♖c8 ♔f7 42.♖a8 ♖e1 43.♖xa7+ ♔g8 44.♖e7 ♔f8 45.♖xe6 ♔f7 46.♖c6 ♖xe4 47.♗h8 ♔g8** 47...♖xh4 48.c4+−. **48.♗a1 ♖e3 49.♗d4 ♖xa3 50.♗e2**
Black resigned.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Lars Karlsson**
Linköping ch-SWE 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.g4!? h5!?
The most straightforward attempt to deal with 6.g4!?.
7.gxh5
Black is better after 7.g5?! ♗xg5 8.♗xg5 ♕xg5 9.♖g1 ♕h6 10.♘xe4 ♗d7.
7...♖xh5 Dubious is 7...f5?! 8.♘f4 ♘f6 9.♖g1 ♖h7 10.♗c4, but 7...♘f6!? 8.♘g3 c5 is an alternative.
8.♘xe4

8...♖h4!?
Putting some pressure on the d4 pawn.
9.♕d3
Nothing is promised by 9.♗g2 ♗d7 10.♘c5?!

♗c6 11.♘xb7 ♕c8 12.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 13.♘c5 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗xc5∓.

9...♘f6 10.♘4c3 ♘d5?!

Passing the initiative into White's hands. Better looks 10...♗d7!?.

11.♖g1 ♘xc3 12.♘xc3 ♔f8

White has good compensation after 12...g6 13.♗e3 ♖xh2 14.0-0-0 ♘d7 15.d5.

13.♕g3

13...g6 14.♗f4 ♗d6 14...♕xd4 15.♗e5 ♗d6 (15...♕b6 16.0-0-0 ♘a6 17.♗xa6 ♕xa6 18.♗xc7±) 16.♗xd6+ cxd6 17.♖d1 ♕f4 18.♖xd6 ♘c6 19.♗g2. **15.♗xd6+ cxd6 16.♗d3?!** White has an edge after 16.0-0-0. **16...e5!? 17.0-0-0 exd4** Very bad is 17...♖g4? 18.♕e3 exd4 19.♕h6+ ♔g8 20.♘e4, and White has an extremely dangerous attack. **18.♘d5 ♘c6 19.♔b1** Wrong is 19.♗xg6? ♖g4 20.♕f3 ♕g5+ 21.♘e3 ♘e5! 22.♖xg4 ♗xg4−+.

19...♘e5!? 20.f4 ♖h3 21.♕f2 ♘xd3 22.cxd3 ♗e6∓ 23.♕xd4 ♗xd5?! Losing his advantage again, correct was 23...♖c8∓. **24.♕xd5 ♕f6** Play is equal after 24...♖xh2 25.♖h1 ♖xh1 26.♖xh1 ♕f6 27.♕xb7. **25.f5!? ♕xf5 26.♕xd6+ ♔g8 27.♔a1!?** The position is absolutely equal, but White keeps on playing for a win. 27.♖gf1 ♖f3 28.♖xf3 ♕xf3 29.♖c1 ♖e8=. **27...♖f3 28.h4 ♖f2 29.h5 ♕xh5** 29...♕f6? 30.♕b4. **30.♖h1 ♕f3 31.♖b1 ♕f6** 31...♖e8∓. **32.♕d7 ♖d8 33.♕h3 ♖f3** 33...♖f5 34.♕h7+ ♔f8∓. **34.♕h7+ ♔f8 35.♖be1 ♖fxd3** 35...♖dxd3? 36.♕h6+ ♕g7 37.♖e8++−. **36.♖hf1 ♕g7**

37.♖xf7+!

A lucky escape!

37...♕xf7 38.♕h8+ ♕g8 39.♕f6+ ♕f7 40.♕h8+ ♕g8

Draw.

CHAPTER 5

Sebastian Siebrecht

Anti-Grünfeld with 5.h4

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4

The Grünfeld Indian is often played by those who know their theory inside out, and are capable of reproducing long lines down to an equal ending. During a tournament in 2009 in Reykjavik I was following the games of my Bundesleague team via the Internet. In front of my enchanted eyes I saw a surprising opening idea as played by my friend and teammate Stelios Halkias. Thus, the idea for tomorrow's game was born!

I have done some further research for this SOS article, and I must say that I like the idea even better. According to the database this line was First played in 1952 by Jozsef Szily. In 1979 it was none other than super GM Bent Larsen who adopted it in Buenos Aires. At the start of the 1980s grandmaster Ribli played it, as well as some of the top Czechoslovakian players Stohl, Ftacnik, Plachetka and Pekarek. In 2000 Jeroen Piket's win over Peter Svidler during the Kasparov Chess Grand Prix caught the attention of the chess world. After that game other grandmasters followed suit: Peter Wells, Pavel Eljanov, Alexander Morozevich and Levon Aronian.

An interesting feature of 5.h4 is that White's sword is not at all that double-edged as it looks. In fact, White often has a choice between a slightly better ending (by taking back on c3 with the d-pawn), or a more adventurous path (by taking with the b-pawn).

5.h4 is a great weapon that will surely sur-

prise your opponent. Naturally, having thought for 10-30 minutes, he decides upon his next move, only to lose without a chance. Hm, all right I will be more serious. Still, the march of the h-pawn is extremely annoying for someone who wants to develop his bishop on g7. Grünfeld players, in contrast to Pirc, KI, or Modern players, are often not adapted to such a direct confrontation without sufficient theoretical knowledge to back them up. See for yourself how you like the following illustrative games.

How should Black reply to White's cheecky move? We will investigate the main replies: 5...h6, 5...h5, 5...♗g7 and 5...♘f6. Clearly, nothing has been researched here into a drawn ending: let the games begin!

□ **Sebastian Siebrecht**
■ **Uri Zak**
Reykjavik 2009

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4!? h6

To stop the march of the opponent's h-pawn, for, if 6.h5, then 6...g5 is strong. The idea of 5...h5 is similar.

An earlier high-level game in Moscow had seen: 5...h5 (blocking the intrepid White h-pawn. However, it weakens the dark squares surrounding Black's king, and square g5 may be used to good effect by the white pieces. Moreover, the h5-pawn creates a target. Let's look at a game by that creative genius, Alexander Morozevich:) 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 (7.dxc3 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 is always a pleasant alternative for White) 7...♗g7 8.d4 (or 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♘g5!?, with pressure. White can always play ♕b3 followed by castling kingside and f4, f5) 8...c5 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.♕d2 ♗g4 11.d5 ♕a5! (a useful interpolation, characteristic of the Grünfeld) 12.♖c1 ♖d8 13.♘g5! (occupying the strong square g5) 13...0-0 14.f3 ♗c8

15.♗c4?! (I would prefer 15.♗e2, after the text Black can free his game. The bishop on c4 only looks good) 15...e6! (15...♘e5 16.♗e2) 16.♗b3 exd5 17.♗xd5 c4! 18.0-0 ♘e7! (with a lovely manoeuvre Black has obtained a satisfactory game) 19.♖fd1 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♗f5 21.♘e4 ♖fe8 (21...♗xe4 22.fxe4 ♖fe8 23.♕c2 f5! 24.♗g5 ♖xe4 25.♗xd8 ♕xd8 26.g3 ♖g4! – this is difficult to find, but it looks as if Black has a decisive attack here. Probably Black had too much respect for the dangerous d-pawn) 22.♗g5 ♖d7 23.♘f6+ ♗xf6 24.♗xf6. In the subsequent course of the game White had an attack on the kingside in return for losing the passed d-pawn. The game eventually ended in a draw. Morozevich-Mamedyarov, Moscow blitz 2007.

6.e4 ♘xc3

Black can also avoid the exchange:

● 6...♘b6 7.d4 ♗g7 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♕d2 and now:

– 9...♘c6 10.d5 is very pleasant for White.

– 9...c6 10.♗e2 ♘8d7, and White can even contemplate to castle queenside.

– Or see how simple chess can be: 9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 e6 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♗b5 ♕f6 13.♕e2 a6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.h5 g5 16.♖hg1 0-0 17.♖g3 ♖ad8 18.♖dg1 ♔h8 19.f4 gxf4 20.e5 ♕f5 21.♖xg7 fxe3 22.♕xe3 ♕xh5 23.♕g3 1-0, Larsen-Franco Ocampos, Buenos Aires 1979.

● 6...♘f6 7.♗c4 ♘c6 8.d4 (White may also

try the forceful 8.e5, and now 8...♘g4 9.d4 ♗g7 10.h5 g5 11.0-0) 8...♗g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗f4 ♗g4 11.d5 ♘a5 12.♗e2 c6 13.♖c1 (13.b4?! ♘h5 14.♗d2 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 e6! 16.bxa5 ♕xh4∓) 13...cxd5 14.exd5 (14.♘xd5) 14...♖c8 15.♕d2 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘c4 17.♕e2 ♕a5 with an unclear game.

7.bxc3

Alternatively, if this suits your style or mood, White can also opt for a pleasant ending, e.g.: 7.dxc3 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♗g4 9.♔c2 ♘d7 10.♗e3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 e5 12.♗h3 ♗d6 13.h5 g5 14.♖ad1 ♔e7 15.♖d2 ♖hd8 16.♖hd1 ♘f6 17.♗g4 b6 18.a4 ♗c5 19.♗xc5+ bxc5 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖xd8 ♔xd8 22.♔d3 ♘d7 23.a5 c6 24.♗xd7 and White won the pawn ending in Eljanov-Sutovsky, Netanya 2009.

7...♗g7 8.d4 c5 9.♖b1

Just like the 8.♖b1 variation, but interpolating h4-h6 favours White.

9...♘c6

● If Black castles, then White has a choice, 9...0-0:

– 10.♗e2 ♘d7 11.0-0 e5!? 12.h5 (12.d5 ♘f6) 12...exd4 13.hxg6 fxg6 14.cxd4 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5, and White had a slight edge in Ribli-Smejkal, Novi Sad 1982, after 16.♗e3. Stronger was 16.♗c4+ ♔h8 17.♗d5 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xd4 19.♗xh6 ♖xf2 20.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 21.♔xf2 ♕h4+ 22.♔g1 ♕xh6 23.♕d8+ ♔h7 24.♕e7+ ♕g7 25.♕d6±.

– 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.♕d2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗g4 13.♘h2! (13.♖xb7 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘xd4∓) 13...♗c8 14.d5 ♘e5 15.f4 ♘d7 16.♘f3, with a nice space advantage and an easy game for White. With ideas like h5, or simply ♗e2 and castles.

● 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 0-0 11.♗e2 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♕xa2 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.d5 ♘a5 15.♗b4 ♗d7 16.♕d2 ♕xd2 17.♘xd2 b6 18.♗xe7 ♖fe8 19.♗b4 ♘b7 20.♖fc1 with a clear edge in Halkias-Gauglitz, Bundesliga 2008/09.

10.d5! ♘e5

Or 10...♗xc3+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♘d4 (12...♘b8 13.♗b5+ ♗d7 14.♗e2 ♕c7 15.♕b2±) 13.♘xd4 cxd4 and now 14.h5 g5 15.♗b5+ ♗d7 16.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 17.♕xd4 0-0 18.0-0 with a slight advantage.

11.♗b5+

Or 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♕d2 ♗g7 13.♗e2 h5 14.c4 e5 15.♖b3 ♕d6 16.♗b2 b6 17.f4 0-0 18.f5 gxf5 19.♖g3 f4 20.♕xf4 and White won in Pekarek-Jasnikowski, Polanica Zdroj 1986.

11...♗d7 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♕d3 a6

Castling is obviously wrong because pawn h6 is hanging.

14.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 15.f4

15...c4?

Overlooking White's next move. If 15...♗g7 then 16.c4 followed by 17.♗e3, and subsequently White will castle with a space advantage and the better game.

16.♕h3!

The game is already over. Black loses a pawn while White's initiative continues unabated.

16...♗g7 16...♕xh3 17.♖xh3 ♗g7 18.♖xb7 winning. **17.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♖xb7+ ♔c8 19.♖xe7 ♗xc3+ 20.♗d2 ♗d4 21.♔e2 ♔d8 22.♖xf7 ♖c8 23.♖b1 c3 24.♗c1 ♖e8 25.♔d3 ♗c5 26.♖bb7 ♖e7 27.♖f8+ ♖e8 28.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 29.e5**

Black resigned.

□ **Jeroen Piket**
■ **Peter Svidler**
KasparovChess GP g/60 Internet 2000

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4!? ♘f6

Black wants to stop the h-pawn without weakening his own structure. It costs a tempo, but it isn't stupid. It took Svidler 15 minutes (from a total of 60) during the game to find this idea.

6.d4

Of course White should now occupy the centre, for, otherwise Black would love to play c5 and ♘c6.

6...♗g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♗e2 c5 9.d5

Since White wants to attack on the kingside, he should try to keep the centre closed!

9...e6

9...b5 is stronger, as Rybka also indicates. Black plays it like a Benoni to undermine pawn e4: 10.e5 (10.♗xb5 ♘xe4 11.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 12.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xb5 is surely OK for Black) 10...♘g4 11.♗xb5 (the alternative is 11.h5 ♘xe5 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♗xb5 to play for a different structure) 11...♘d7! (Black goes for development) 12.e6 fxe6 13.dxe6 ♘de5 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.0-0 a6 17.♗e2 ♗xe6 18.♖e1 ♗f7 19.♗f4 ♘c6 20.♗f3 ♖ac8 21.♗g4 ♖a8 22.♗f3 ♖ac8 23.♗g4. In this exciting position the players agreed a draw. As compensation for his weaknesses Black has an active game along the d-file. Zviagintsev-Najer, Moscow 2003.

10.h5

Attaboy!! Let's go for the king!

10...♘xh5

11.g4?!

Energetic, but White had the even more powerful 11. ♘g5! when he obtains strong pressure against h7! For example: 11...exd5 (11...♘f6 12.e5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.♘xh7) 12.♗xh5 gxh5 13.♕xh5 h6 14.♘f3 and Black's kingside falls apart: 14...♖e8 15.♗xh6 ♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♖xe4+ 17.♗e3! and even if Black will get some counterplay with 17...♕f6 White ought to win.

11...♘f6 12.♗g5 ♕b6?!

Clearly stronger was 12...♕a5!: 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.e5 ♗g7 15.d6 ♖d8.

13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♕d2 ♗g7 15.0-0-0 ♘d7 16.g5 c4?

Again 16...♕a5 planning ...♗xc3 was correct.

17.♖h2 ♖e8 18.d6

White closes the centre and starts a direct attack on the kingside.

18...♖d8 19.♕f4

Now White threatens to take on h7. As after the subsequent ♕xf7 Black cannot prevent a deadly check from h1.

19...♕a5?

Too late. Black should have got rid of his bishop by taking on c3.

19...♗xc3!. In this way Svidler could at least have posed Piket some complex questions. Let's see:

20.bxc3 ♕a5 21.♖xh7! (21.♔b2 e5 22.♕h4 ♘f8±) 21...♕xc3+ 22.♔b1 ♕b4+ 23.♔c2 ♕a4+ 24.♔d2! (White must not be frightened here) 24...♕a5+! (24...♕xa2+ 25.♔e1!! ♔xh7 26.♕xf7+ ♔h8 27.♔f1! ♖f8 28.♕xg6 ♖xf3 – 28...♕b2 29.♕h6+ ♔g8 30.♕xe6+ ♖f7 31.♗xc4 ♕g7 32.g6+– – 29.♗xf3 ♕b2 30.♕h6+ ♔g8 31.♕xe6+ ♔g7 32.♕h6+ ♔g8 33.e5!+–)

25.♔e3! and the king goes walkabout:

– 25...♕a3+ 26.♗d3! ♕c5+ 27.♔e2! (27.♘d4? ♕xd4+! 28.♔xd4 e5+ 29.♕xe5 ♘xe5 30.♖dh1 ♘f3+ 31.♔e3 ♗h3!!) 27...cxd3+ 28.♔f1 ♖f8 (28...♔xh7? 29.♕xf7+ ♔h8 30.♔g2) 29.♕h4 ♕c3 30.e5+–.

– 25...♕c5+ 26.♘d4 f5 27.♕h2 ♕a3+ 28.♗d3 f4+ 29.♕xf4 ♖f8 30.♕h2+–.

– 25...♕c3+! 26.♗d3! f5! (26...♖f8 27.♕h4 cxd3 28.♖h1! d2+ 29.♔f4+–) 27.gxf6 ♕xf6 (27...♘xf6? 28.♖h6!; 27...♔xh7? 28.♕h6+! ♔xh6 29.♖h1 mate) 28.♖dh1!? ♕xf4+ 29.♔xf4 ♘f8 30.♖h8+ ♔g7 31.♗xc4 ♖xd6 32.e5 and the attack goes on.

20.♖xh7!

Now it's all over!

20...f5 20...♖f8 21.♖dh1 ♗xc3 22.e5! ♗xb2+ 23.♔b1! ♗xe5 24.♕xe5! and mate in seven. 20...♔xh7 21.♕xf7.

21.gxf6 ♘xf6

21...♔xh7 22.♖h1+ ♔g8 23.fxg7+–;

21...♗xf6 22.♖xd7 ♖f8 23.♕h6!? ♗xd7 24.♕xg6+ ♗g7 25.♖g1 ♖f7 26.♘g5+−.

22.♖xg7+! ♔xg7

23.e5

Lovely. It all fits together perfectly! Black is either mated or he loses the house.
Black resigned.

□ **Pavel Eljanov**
■ **Maxim Turov**
Kharkov 2001

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.h4 ♗g7 6.h5

Marching on! And why not indeed, if Black does not prevent h4-h5. Go for it!

6...♘xc3

● Again it was Piket who won a quick attacking game in the Melody Amber Tournament in Monaco! 6...♘c6 7.g3 ♗g4 8.h6 ♗xc3 (giving up on both his bishops. See for yourself how you feel about this. The alternative is 8...♗f6) 9.bxc3 ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♕d6 11.♗e2 0-0-0 12.♕b3 f5 13.a4 (a strange position. But isn't that exactly what we love!) 13...e5 14.a5 e4 15.f4 ♘f6 16.0-0 ♘g4 17.♗a3 ♕xd2 (losing immediately. Better was the less impulsive 17...♕d7) 18.a6! ♘a5 19.axb7+ ♔b8 20.♕b5 e3 21.♗c5 exf2+ 22.♖xf2 and Black is going to pieces. 1-0, Piket-Shirov, Monaco 1998.

● 6...0-0 this helps White: 7.hxg6 hxg6 8.♕a4 (the start of a nice manoeuvre towards the kingside) 8...e5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♕h4 (as planned. Alright it's not mate yet, but see how it continues) 10...♖e8 11.e4 ♕d8 12.♕h7+ ♔f8 13.♗c4 ♗e6 14.d3 ♗xc4 15.dxc4 ♕d3 (does this mean that Black has counterplay? Oh no! Black is already dead and gone!) 16.♗h6 ♕xe4+ 17.♔f1 ♗xh6 18.♕xh6+ ♔e7 19.♘xe5! ♘d7 20.♕g5+ ♔e6 21.♖e1 ♕xe5 22.♖xe5+ ♘xe5 23.♖h3 f6 24.♕f4 ♖h8 25.♕e4 ♖xh3 26.gxh3 ♔d6 27.♕d5+ 1-0, Sumets-Moldovanenko, Odessa 2001. So simple is playing chess with 5.h4!

7.bxc3

7.dxc3 is of course less strong here than in the other lines. However, it is still playable even here.

7...♘d7

– 7...c5 looks more to the point: 8.♕a4+ ♕d7 9.♕h4 (I would prefer 9.♕c4 b6 10.♘g5) 9...♗f6 10.♕f4 ♕f5 11.g3 g5 12.♕e3 ♘c6 13.♗g2 ♗d7 14.h6 ♖c8 with a completely unclear game. Aronian-Kamsky, Nice (blindfold) 2009.

– 7...e5? is no good, as the following game demonstrates: 8.e4 ♗g4 9.♕b3!± ♗xf3 10.♕xb7 ♗xg2 11.♗xg2 ♘d7 12.♗a3 ♖b8 13.♕d5 ♘b6 14.♕c6+ ♕d7 15.♕c5 ♖d8 16.hxg6 fxg6 17.♖d1 with a clear edge in Wells-Salimbeni, Torquay ch-GBR 2009.

8.e4 e5 9.♗a3 ♘b6 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.h6 ♗f6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♗c1 ♗f6 14.♗a3 ♗e7 15.♗b2!? ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♕d3

It was on this move that Black had counted. He aims for play on the d-file. Blocking on d3 should stop White from using his bishop pair to good effect.

17.♗e2! ♕xe4 18.♗f3 ♕c4

Black probably did not like the position after 18...♕d3!? 19.♗xb7 ♖d8 20.♗c6+ (20.♖e1!?) 20...♔f8. This does not look so bad to me.

19.d3!

Great! White does not want to win back the pawn. He wants to use his bishops.

19...♕e6 20.c4! 0-0 21.♖e1 f6

22.a4!

Not only a pair of raking bishops, the knight on b6 becomes a problem piece as well.

22...c6 23.a5 ♘d7 24.a6!

Loosening Black's position.

24...b6 25.d4!

Excellent! Great piece cooperation.

25...♖fd8

25...♕xc4 26.♖c1 ♕xa6 (26...♕a2 27.♖e2 and the black queen is in big trouble) 27.♕b3+ ♔h8 28.♕e6. And White is on his way to the pub.

26.d5 ♕d6 27.dxc6 ♘c5 28.♗d5+ ♔h8 29.♕f3 ♖f8 30.♖e2 ♕c7 31.♕g3 ♗d6 32.♖ae1 ♖ae8 33.f4

White is obviously winning by now.

33...♘e6 34.♔h1 ♖f7 35.fxe5 ♗c5 36.♖d1 f5 37.♖ed2 ♔g8 38.♕h4 ♗e7 39.♕g3 ♗b4 40.♖f2 ♕e7 41.♖f3 ♗c5 42.♗c1 ♔f8 43.♖df1 ♕c7 44.♗g5 ♘xg5 45.♕xg5 ♖xe5 46.♗xf7 ♔xf7

46...♗c7 also loses: 47.♕g3 ♔xf7 48.♖xf5+ gxf5 49.♖xf5+ ♔e6 (49...♖xf5 50.♕xc7 ♖h5+ 51.♔g1+−) 50.♖xe5+ ♕xe5 51.♕xe5+ ♔xe5 52.c7 and White wins.

47.♖xf5+

And now we see how useful a pawn on h6 can be!

CHAPTER 6

Nikita Vitiugov

English: Shirov's Pet Line

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7

Many times I have heard the following opinion expressed by strong grandmasters: if you have White and don't feel in your best form, play the English Opening and you are guaranteed a quiet, comfortable game. Is this really so? In chess there are no universal prescriptions.

But if you are in the mood for initiating complicated and lively play from the very first moves in this opening as Black, I can recommend this article to you.

So, 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4!?. Black's plan is simple – to double the white c-pawns and demonstrate their weakness in the subsequent manoeuvring battle. In the given instance this familiar motif may take on rather a new aspect:

□ **Bu Xiangzhi**
■ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
Ergun China-Russia 2006

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.g3 ♗xc3 4.bxc3 f5

An interesting moment. White has allowed the capture on c3. Since the knight has not yet come out to f6, Black can advance his f-pawn, after which the position acquires certain specific features.

5.♗g2 ♘f6 6.♖b1 ♘c6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♕e8 9.c5 b6 10.♗a3 bxc5 11.♗xc5 d6 12.♗a3 e4 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.cxd4 ♗e6

And the players agreed a draw.

Not surprisingly, the main way of fighting for an advantage is considered to be the natural 3.♘d5, after which Black has a choice of as many as five continuations. However, most of these are of an experimental nature, for example:

□ **Joel Lautier**
■ **Vasilios Kotronias**
Halkidiki 1992

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗a5?!
A sharp continuation, which, however, leads to a stable advantage for White.
4.b4 c6 5.bxa5 cxd5 6.cxd5 ♕xa5

7.e4
Not so clear is 7.♕b3 ♘f6 8.♘f3 d6 9.♗a3 ♘e4! 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♖c1 0-0, Kramnik-Kharlov, Kherson 1991.
7...♘f6 8.♗d3
Probably the most forceful. 8.f3 0-0 9.♘e2 d6 10.a4 ♘a6 11.♘c3 ♘c5 12.♗a3 ♘h5 13.♗c4 ♗d7 14.♕b1 f5 was unclear in Illescas-Psakhis, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.
8...♘a6 9.f3 d6 10.♗b2! ♘c5 11.♗c2 ♗d7 12.a4
The structure of the position has clarified. Black is held in a positional vice, from which it will be not at all easy to escape.
12...0-0 13.♘e2 ♖ac8 14.♗c3 ♕a6 15.d4 exd4 16.♗xd4 ♕a5+ 17.♔f2 ♘e8 18.g4!

And subsequently White converted his advantage into a win.

□ **Valery Salov**
■ **Vladimir Kramnik**
Linares 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗d6?!
A very artificial move, which White exploits by active play.

4.d4! c6
4...♘c6?! is altogether too novel: 5.♘f3 e4 6.♘g5 f5 7.c5! and Black's position is critical.
5.dxe5 ♗xe5 6.♘f3 d6 7.♘xe5

The alternative is 7.♘c3!?

7...dxe5 8.♘c3 ♕xd1+ 9.♘xd1

In the resulting endgame White has a stable, although not very big advantage.

9...♗e6 10.b3 a5 11.♗b2 f6 12.♘c3 ♘a6 13.0-0-0 ♘h6 14.h3 ♘f7 15.e3

On White's side is a long-term factor in the form of the two bishops, and so he unhurriedly strengthens his position.

15...0-0 16.♗e2 ♘b4 17.f4 b5!?

In the given instance passive defence is not good, and so Black initiates counterplay. However, with accurate play White extinguishes the opponent's activity.

18.g4 exf4 19.exf4 bxc4 20.bxc4 f5 21.a3 ♘a6 22.♘a4! ♖ab8 23.♖hg1 fxg4 24.hxg4 ♖fe8 25.♖d2 ♘d8 26.f5

White has a big advantage.

Thus by trial and error Black arrived at the present-day main reply 3...♗e7, which is the real subject of this article. Here White still has to demonstrate a clear-cut way to gain an advantage.

Initially a popular plan involved attempts to demonstrate the power of White's dark-squared bishop, which has been left without an opponent, but it lost its dangers for Black, thanks to the efforts of Alexey Shirov.

□ **Yasser Seirawan**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Biel Interzonal 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.♘f3

Here the move order does not play any particular role – White can begin with either 4.♘f3, or 4.d4.

4...d6 5.d4

5...e4!

The critical and correct approach. Since White himself does not want to occupy the centre, why shouldn't Black exploit this?

White obtained somewhat the better game after 5...♘c6 6.e3 e4 7.♘g1 ♗g5 8.h4 ♗e7 9.♘e2 f5 10.♘ef4 ♘f6 11.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12.♘d5 0-0 13.♗d2 ♘c7 14.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 15.d5 in Gelfand-Shirov, Moscow 1992.

6.♘d2 f5 7.e3
7.f3 c6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7 and Black is alright.
7...♘f6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7

9.d5
This structurally correct decision proves in the given instance to be very risky – the black knights obtain the e5-point, which plays a key role in the subsequent play. However, 9.♗e2 can be met by 9...c5!?, while in the event of 9.b3 another central set-up is possible: 9...0-0 10.♗b2 c6 11.♗e2 d5 with counterplay.
9...0-0 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.0-0 ♘e5 12.♘b3
With a heavy tread the knight heads for d4. White could have had the advantage, were it not for dynamic factors in the form of Black's better development.
12...♗d7 13.♘d4

13...♘fg4!?
Exploiting the fixing of the centre, Black sets his sights on the white king.
14.h3 ♖f6!
Alexey Shirov remains true to himself, even when playing such an outwardly tedious and prosaic opening as the English.
15.g3
It looks extremely risky to play 15.hxg4 fxg4 16.g3 ♖af8, with a deadly initiative.
15...♖h6
Not a single step back. Possibly 15...♘h6 would have been positionally more correct.
16.♔g2 ♖xh3
The rook's fate was decided on the previous move, since after 16...♘f6 17.♖h1± White comfortably defends his weaknesses.
17.♔xh3 f4
And in the subsequent mind-boggling struggle Black went on to win.

□ **Joël Lautier**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Tilburg 1996

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.♘f3 e4 6.♘d2 f5

7.♘b1
Joël Lautier chooses a different approach – at the cost of a couple of tempi White pre-

fers to develop his bishop outside the pawn chain.

7...♘f6 8.♘xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗g5 ♗e6 11.e3 ♘bd7

12.♗e2

As was also the case earlier, 12.d5 is not altogether in the spirit of the position: 12...♗f7 13.♘b5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3 ♘e5 and thanks to his piece grouping in the centre, Black is alright.

12...c6 13.0-0 ♕f7 14.d5

After his restrained play in the opening, White suddenly launches himself at the opponent. 14.b3!? d5 15.c5 was a worthy alternative, with a different type of game.

14...cxd5 15.♘b5

15...♘e5!

Naturally, Black answers in kind. The inert 15...dxc4?! was weak: 16.♕xd6! ♖fc8 (16...♖ac8 17.♘xa7!?±) 17.♘d4 ♘c5 18.♖ac1, with strong compensation for the pawn.

16.♘xd6

Play is equal after 16.♗xf6?! ♕xf6 17.♘c7 ♖ac8 18.♘xd5 ♕f7.

16...♕g6

And here in the game there followed:

17.♗xf6

Meanwhile, there was an interesting resource available to White: 17.♗f4! ♘xc4 18.♘xb7! ♘xb2 19.♕d4 ♘c4 20.♘c5±.

17...♖xf6 18.cxd5 ♗d7 19.♘c4 ♘xc4 20.♗xc4 f4

and after an outburst of complications the game came to a peaceful end.

In the end, White has had to adopt a more ambitious set-up, involving the complete occupation of the centre. But the price for this – his lag in development – forces him to act with extreme care and accuracy.

□ **Curt Hansen**
■ **Ivan Sokolov**
Groningen 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.e4

When you first look at this position, you may think that White has made incredible progress over the first five moves – he has occupied the centre, he has established his knight at d5, and he is not behind in development. However, it transpires that Black too has his trumps.

5...♘f6 6.♘xe7 ♕xe7

7.f3

It appears that the transformation of the situation has merely consolidated White's position. But in the immediate future his fine-looking pawn centre may become a good target.

7...exd4 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕c3 0-0 10.♗e3

White is hardly promised any advantage by 10.♗g5 ♖e8 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕xf6 gxf6, and on the next move Black gets rid of his weakness on f6.

10...♖e8 11.♘e2

11...♘e5

Black's slow handling of the game gradually places him on the verge of defeat. 11...♘h5!? was an interesting attempt, with the idea after 12.g4 of sacrificing a piece by 12...♗xg4 13.fxg4 ♘f6 14.♖g1 ♘xe4 15.♕a3, and in this position Black has a wide choice of continuations. For example, 15...♘e5 16.0-0-0 ♘xc4 17.♕b3 ♘c3! 18.♕xc3 ♘xe3 19.♖d2 ♕e6 with sharp play. 11...a5!? was another critical continuation.

12.♘f4 ♘g6 13.0-0-0 ♘xf4 14.♗xf4

White has a stable advantage, and Black has no way of opposing his initiative on the kingside.

14...a6 15.h4 ♗e6 16.g4 ♘d7 17.g5 b5 18.h5 ♕f8 19.h6 g6

20.♖xd6! The game is decided. **20...b4 21.♕d4 ♖ad8**

And here White suddenly deviated from the

correct course and gave away the greater part of his advantage.

22.♖xd7? There was a straightforward win by 22.♖xa6 ♘c5 23.♕f6 ♘d7 24.♕g7+! – perhaps White missed this subtlety?

22...♗xd7 And the battle flared up with renewed strength.

In this, seemingly a sideline of the English Opening, the theoretical disputes are continuing to this day. One of the main drivers of theory in this variation for Black, Alexey Shirov, is still prepared at a convenient moment to again resort to his old and well-tested counter to the English Opening.

□ **Levon Aronian**
■ **Alexey Shirov**
Morelia/Linares 2008

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.e4 ♘f6 6.♘xe7 ♕xe7 7.f3 ♘h5!?

A move which Shirov had already employed earlier in a game against Lautier.

8.♗e3

8...f5

And here is an important novelty. Earlier Alexey played 8...0-0, after which in his comments he himself indicated the way to gain an advantage: 9.d5! (not so clear is 9.♘e2 f5 10.exf5 exd4 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕d2 ♗xf5, Lautier-Shirov, Las Palmas 1994) 9...f5 10.exf5 ♘f4 (10...♗xf5 11.g4 ♗xg4 12.fxg4 ♕h4+ 13.♔d2 ♘g3 14.hxg3 ♕xh1 15.♗h3!± intending g5) 11.g4±, and if 11...b5 12.cxb5 ♗b7 13.♗c4! ♘g2+ 14.♔f2 ♘xe3 15.♔xe3 (Shirov).

9.exf5 ♘f6

This quiet retreat is the point of Black's novelty. 9...exd4 10.♕xd4 ♘c6 11.♕d2 ♗xf5 12.g4 0-0-0 is excessively sharp, since White has the strong resource 13.0-0-0! d5 14.♗g5 ♘f6 15.gxf5 dxc4 16.♖e1, when he remains a piece up.

10.♘e2

By responding in this way, White can possibly hope for some pressure from the opening, but not an advantage.

Of course, 10.g4!? was more reckless and critical, after which the play can develop roughly along the following lines: 10...h5 11.g5 ♘h7 12.dxe5 ♕xe5 13.♕d2 ♗xf5 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 with chances for both sides. This continuation still has to be tested in practice.

10...exd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xf5 12.♕d2 ♘c6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0

13...0-0?! is risky in view of 14.♗c3, when White's potential pawn storm on the kingside may be very dangerous.

14.g4

Probably the only possibility of setting Black problems from the opening was 14.♗c3, trying to retain the bishop pair.

However, here too Black would have had adequate counter-chances.

14...♗g6

15.♘f4

Now 15.♗c3? runs into the highly unpleasant 15...♘e4!

15...♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♔b8 17.h4 ♗f7 18.♗d3

And peace was concluded on White's proposal.

To sum up, I can say that in the as yet insufficiently explored expanses of the English Opening, the variation with an early ♗b4 appears to be an interesting way of quickly taking the play along lines familiar to you. Here you are guaranteed interesting play with a wealth of possibilities.

CHAPTER 7

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Jeroen Bosch

Bayonet Attack in the Grünfeld

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?

The Grünfeld is a dynamic, hypermodern opening that makes for attractive chess. Unfortunately, the theoretical workload is also of the highest order. It is perhaps for this reason that an unusual high number of SOS-articles have already appeared on Grünfeld byways. Is it the nature of the Grünfeld that invites creative and early deviations from the main lines? Perhaps many white players expect that it will pay off to surprise an opponent who is obviously not averse to spending huge amounts of his time on opening study? Do we see so many sidelines because the main lines don't promise White much? Whatever the reason, the present subject clearly falls into the SOS category: an early deviation, little theory, a lot of fun, and, in this case a quite eccentric starting move.

Avid SOS-readers will perhaps be reminded of our coverage of 4.h4 in SOS-3 (Chapter 3, p.28). Paradoxically, it turned out that 4.h4 – although a flank action – was in fact motivated by a wish to dominate in the centre. This is most obvious from the continuation 4...♗g7 5.h5 ♘xh5 6.cxd5 and White has the better chances. With 4.g4 White also aims to gain influence in the centre (obviously 5.g5 and 6.cxd5 is a threat). This may be illustrated by 4...♘xg4?! 5.cxd5 and 4...♗xg4 5.♕b3 intending 6.cxd5 after 5...♗c8. This should be sufficient philosophical background for us to embark on our 4.g4 adventure.

Let us start with an appetizer: the game Pantaleev-Radev, Bulgaria 1979 (all is new that is long forgotten!).

□ **Dimitar Pantaleev**
■ **Nikolai Radev**
Bulgaria 1979

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?

Pantaleev was not the first to play this audacious move. Already in 1975 this idea had sprung from the fertile mind of Yacov Murey (Murey-Napolov, Cheliabinsk 1975, is the earliest game we could find featuring 4.g4).

4...dxc4

4...♘xg4 5.cxd5 is a fairly obvious point. In the same year Pantaleev also faced 4...♗xg4 when his game against Grancharov went 5.♕b3 ♗c8 6.cxd5 ♗g7 7.e4 c6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.♘ge2.

5.h3

See Variation III B for the alternative 5.g5.

5...♗g7

5...♘d5 6.e4 ♘b6! is what Jonathan Rowson recommends in his *Understanding the Grünfeld*. In *Informant* 29 (which featured Pantaleev's game) Minev only mentions 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗g7 8.♗xc4 c5 9.♘e2 which he calls unclear – a fair enough verdict given that White's space advantage on the kingside cuts both ways.

6.e4 0-0 7.f4!?

7.♗xc4 c5 is simply good for Black, as the only suitable positional reply 8.d5 fails to 8...b5 9.♗xb5 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 11.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕xb5 and Black's chances are preferable.

7...c6

I don't like this passive move – although, admittedly, Radev is playing with a natural idea in mind. Why not the typical Grünfeld lever 7...c5.

8.e5

Obviously not 8.♗xc4 because of 8...b5 9.♗b3 b4 and pawn e4 falls. This is the point of Radev's 7...c6.

8...♘d5 9.♗xc4 ♗e6 10.♗b3 ♘d7

10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗d5 12.♘f3 b5 was given by Minev, but White can be happy with his space advantage after 13.0-0.

11.♘ge2 ♘7b6 12.♘e4

This avoids the exchange of pieces, thus emphasizing Black's lack of space. Without the Grünfeld lever ...c5 Black is suffering.

12...♕c8 13.♘2g3 ♘c7 14.♗c2

Again avoiding the exchange of pieces. The bishop will be very useful in the coming kingside attack.

14...♖d8 15.b3 ♘b5 16.♗b2 ♘d5 17.♕d2 ♗h6

Finally, Black is doing something positive: attacking a pawn and provoking the 'ugly' 18.g5. However, as it turns out Black lacks

the means to take advantage of this advance – he cannot really control square f5. Minev analysed 17...♗xg4 to see if Black could get out of his cramped position with brute force. His line continues 18.hxg4 ♕xg4 19.♕e2 (19.♘e2 is safe – Black has no real compensation) 19...♕xf4 20.♗c1 and wins. However, this is wrong because Black can continue with 20...♘xd4! 21.♗xf4 ♘xe2 22.♘xe2 ♘xf4 23.♘xf4 ♗xe5 when he is winning back material with the better prospects.

18.g5 ♗g7 19.♘c5 Gaining control over f5. **19...a5** 19...♗xh3 is met by the crushing 20.f5 ♗g4 21.♕h2 as Minev correctly pointed out.

20.♘xe6 ♕xe6 21.f5 ♕d7 22.a4 ♘bc7 23.0-0-0

Pantaleev finally castles – but on the queenside not a common sight in the Grünfeld! He has an overwhelming position. **23...e6 24.fxg6** Correctly opening the position. **24...fxg6 25.♘e4 b5 26.♘f6+ ♗xf6 27.gxf6 bxa4 28.bxa4 ♘b4 29.♗e4** Pantaleev needs this bishop for the attack. The position is messy, but White should get there first. **29...♔h8?**

29...♖ab8 was much stronger to gain counterplay. Black plans ...♘cd5, ...♘a2+ and an eventual ...♕b7. White needs to take more care than in the game by combining attack and defence with 30.♖hg1 ♔h8 31.♖g3.

30.♕h6 ♖g8 31.h4 ♘cd5 32.♗b1 To defend against an annoying check on a2, but 32.h5 was also strong as 32...♘a2+ is met by 33.♔b1 ♘ac3+ 34.♗xc3 ♘xc3+ 35.♔c2 ♘xe4 36.hxg6 and wins.

32...c5 33.♖df1 ♕f7? 34.h5 Crashing through the defences.

34...g5 35.♗g6 ♕c7

36.♔d2! Black is still alive after 36.f7 cxd4+ 37.♔b1 ♖xg6! 38.f8♕+ ♖g8.

36...cxd4 37.♖c1 ♘c3 38.f7 ♖xg6 38...♖g7 39.♖hf1 ♖f8 40.♗xh7 is the 'prosaic' finish. **39.hxg6 ♘e4+ 40.♔e2 d3+ 41.♔f3 ♘d2+ 42.♔g4**

Black resigned.

Hopefully this game has whetted your appetite to take a look at the variations below.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4!?

The gambit of a great eccentric, grandmaster Yacov Murey. Black has many different strategies, involving both accepting the sacrifice and refraining from pawn-grabbing.

Variation I

4...♘xg4

There are other moves that deserve more tests than they have received in tournament practice: 4...c5, 4...c6 and perhaps even 4...h6 (although 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 feels natural).

5.cxd5

Clearly worse is 5.♘xd5 c6 6.♘c3 e5! 7.d5 ♕h4 8.♘e4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♘e3, Niemela-Sidorkov, Jyväskylä 1991.

5...c6 6.e4 e5

Not 6...cxd5 7.♗b5+.

7.h3 ♕h4 8.♕f3! ♘h6 9.dxe5 ♗g7 10.♗f4 ♘d7 11.♕e3

Or 11.♗g3 ♕e7 12.d6 which is also good.

11...♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♕h5

This is Cziszar-Szekeres, Gyöngös 2003, and here, instead of the game continuation 15.♗g2, White had a couple of interesting possibilities: 15.♗e2 and 15.♖d1.

Variation II

4...♗xg4 5.♕b3

Or 5.♗g2!? when White also play for the pawn.

Subvariation A

5...dxc4 6.♕xb7 ♘bd7

7.♘b5

7.♗g2!? is interesting when Duckworth-Burg, Los Angeles 1991, favoured White after 7...♘b6 8.♘b5 ♖c8 9.♗c6+ ♗d7 10.♘xa7 ♖b8 11.♗xd7+ ♘fxd7 12.♕f3.

7...♖c8 8.f3 Dangerous is 8.♗f4 e5!? 9.dxe5 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3. **8...♗e6 9.e4 c6 10.♘a3 ♘b6 11.♗e3 ♖c7 12.♕a6 ♗g7 13.♘e2 0-0 14.♗g2** White has the advantage, Cairou-Rodier, France 2002/03.

Subvariation B

5...♗c8 6.cxd5 ♗g7

If 6...c6 7.♗g2 ♕b6 8.♗f4 ♕xb3 9.axb3 cxd5 10.♘b5 ♘a6 11.♖xa6 bxa6 12.♘c7+ ♔d8 13.♘xa8 ♗b7 14.♘c7 e6 15.e3 with a big advantage, Taffijn-Van Belle, cr. 2002.

7.e4

A fairly high-level game (Plaskett-Fedorowicz, London 1987) saw 7.♗g2 0-0 8.♘f3 c6 9.e4 cxd5 10.e5 ♘e4 11.♕xd5 ♘xc3 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.bxc3 ♗e6 14.♘g5 ♗d5 and Black was OK in the ending.

7...c6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.♘ge2

As mentioned in our appetizer above.

9...♕a5

And now 10.0-0 cxd5 11.e5 leads to an advantage for White.

Variation III

4...dxc4

Here White has a choice.

After the excessively gambit-like 5.e4 ♗xg4 6.f3 ♗c8 7.♗xc4 ♗g7 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.♘ge2 (stronger is 9.f4, which needs testing in practice) 9...c5!? 10.e6 fxe6 11.♘f4 ♘b6 12.♗xe6 ♕xd4 White has no compensation for the two pawns, Pietrasanta-R.Bagirov, Le Touquet 1998.

Subvariation A

5.h3 is more positional.

5...♘d5 For 5...♗g7 see our appetizer.

6.♗g2

6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 is worth considering, as here the compensation is very decent. However, as we noted above Rowson has argued that 6...♘b6 is stronger.

Black has a good game after 6.♕a4+ ♗d7 7.♕xc4 ♗c6 8.♘f3 ♗g7 9.♗g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘d7 12.♕d3 e5!, Send-Albrent, Dortmund 1999.

6...♘b6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.♗f4 ♘c6 9.♕d2 h5! 10.♘b5 ♘d5 11.e4 ♘xf4 12.♕xf4 e5! 13.dxe5 ♗e6 14.♖d1 ♕e7 15.0-0 hxg4 16.hxg4 a6 17.♘c3 ♕c5 18.♘d5 0-0-0 with an excellent game for Black, Gervasio-Djuric, Cannes 1999.

Subvariation B

5.g5 is the logical continuation:

5...♘d5 6.♗g2

Weaker is 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♗e3 h6! 8.f4 hxg5 9.fxg5 ♗g7 10.♕d2 ♘c6 11.♘ge2 ♗g4, Moravcik-Pribyl, Sala 1995.

6...♘b6 7.♗f4 ♗g7 8.♘f3 ♘c6

9.d5

The quiet 9.e3 is also possible.

9...♘b4

It is clear that Black should have seriously considered 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕xd5 11.♗xc7 ♗g4, with an excellent game.

10.♘e5 0-0 11.a3 ♘a6 12.♕d4 So as not to allow ♘a6-c5-b3.

12...♘d7 13.♖d1 ♕e8 14.h4 b5 15.♕e3 with a complicated game, Murey-Napolov, Cheliabinsk 1975.

Variation IV

4...♗g7 5.g5

Here 5.h3 and then 6.♗g2 is possible and not at all bad, playing a kind of extended fianchetto.

5...♘e4 6.♘xd5 c6

Or 6...e6 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.e3 e5!?

11.d5 e4 12.♘d2 ♗xc3 13.♖b1 ♘e5 14.♕c2 ♘f3+ 15.♔d1 ♗xd2 16.♕xe4+ ♕e7 17.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 18.♗xd2 ♘xg5 19.♗g2 with advantage to White, Krausser-Jergler, Austria 1999/2000.

7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♕a5 9.♗d2

Black has sacrificed a pawn and he now tries to attack White's centre.

9...c5 10.♕b3!?

10.e3 cxd4 11.exd4 0-0 is dangerous, as the white king is too exposed.

10...♘d7 11.e4 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕b6 13.♕xb6 ♘xb6 14.♗e3 with a sound pawn up in Maatoug-Ris, St. Lorrain 2001.

CHAPTER 8

Willy Hendriks

Taking the Lion by its Throat

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3

In this article I will have a look at a set-up with g4 and f3 (in that order!) against an opening that in my homeland is known as 'the Lion' ('de Leeuw'). In other countries this opening (1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7) is known as ... Well, I actually don't know, does this opening have a name?

So let's stick to this name. After all, the publisher of the SOS-series has also released a book called 'The Black Lion: the Chess Predator's Choice Against Both 1.e4 and 1.d4'.

To give some history on this name: two Dutch chess amateurs, Jerry van Rekom and Leo Jansen, did a lot of work on this system and published their findings in 1997 in a Dutch language edition. They called their system 'the Lion'. This 1997 Dutch edition was later expanded and translated, resulting in the publication mentioned above.

For their work the authors were both praised and criticized. Some stronger players looked upon them as dilettanti, and claimed that players of club level are not able to write a decent opening book.

Be that as it may, the book was quite successful and it added to the popularity of this opening. So every 1.e4 player will meet the Lion now and then, maybe more often at club level than at top level (and probably more often in the Netherlands than in the rest of the world).

After 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 the most popular choice is 4.♘f3, when play can transpose into a 'normal' Philidor (the so-called Hanham Variation). Second choice is 4.f4.
From the alternatives the move 4.g4 has become quite popular in recent years and it is scoring very well. After 4...h6 White usually continues with 5.h3, followed by moves like ♗g2, ♘ge2, and (most often) castling short.
In this article I propose the move 5.f3, with the set-up ♗e3, ♘ge2-g3, ♕d2 and castling long in mind. Transposition via 4.♗e3 is of course possible, but I will explain below why 4.g4 and 5.f3 is more accurate.

Is this set-up a surprise?

I have to admit, a set-up with f3, ♗e3, ♕d2 and 0-0-0 cannot be called highly original. However, in the position after 4...h6, in the 116 games in my database the move 5.f3 was only played five times (scoring 100% by the way). Two more games reached this set-up via 5.♗e3.
We actually do get some more games via the move-order 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3, if Black responds to a subsequent g4 by White with the move ...h6. But that is by no means a forced reaction, whereas the direct 4.g4 almost always is answered by 4...h6.

Is this set-up a weapon?

Yes it is!
Let's illustrate a vital point of this move-order. After 4.g4 Black is almost forced to play 4...h6. But if you start with 4.f3 and only later on play g4, then Black will not always be so kind to play h6.
For example in the position after 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 ♗e7 6.♕d2 c6 7.0-0-0 0-0 8.g4 (see the first diagram in the next column).
Black doesn't play the silly 8...h6, but continues his own play with 8...b5. In case of 9.g5, Black has good squares for his knight on h5 and e8.

Now compare the above diagram with this position.

Here, with ♘e2 and ...h6 included, 9...0-0 would of course be suicide! Not only because White can open files with g5, but also because of the ♗xh6 sacrifice.
So for those players who simply want to follow their course with ...0-0, you have something in store.

Dealing with the Lion on autopilot

Our set-up is also a weapon against the players of what might be called 'the Lion on autopilot'.
If you look at the website of the authors of *The Black Lion* (www.vanrekom.nl/thelion), you will see the main plan of their system visualized. On a board with only black pieces, the moves d6, ♘f6, ♘bd7, e5, h6, c6, ♗e7,

♕c7, ♘f8, g5, ♘g6, ♘f4, ♖g8 are played (over and over again). As an advantage of playing the Lion, this website states that: 'You play your own game. Your play doesn't depend on the moves your opponent does.' (Sic!)

In their book the authors give the line 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 ♗e7 6.♕d2 c6 7.0-0-0 and then they advise the move 7...♕c7, 'mainly to keep playing according to the standard plan'.

I think this whole attitude is ill-advised. Playing a good opening depends on having a multitude of strategical and tactical ideas, not on repeating a standard scheme regardless of what the opponent does!

If you meet an opponent who blindly follows this advice, the idea presented in this article will be very effective. Continuing the line after 7...♕c7 with 8.g4 h6 (now we are in our set-up by transposition) 9.♘ge2 ♘f8 (looks dubious to me) 10.♘g3 g5 (given a !? by the authors) you reach the following position:

Here you can start to think about ways to demolish Black's position: 11.h4 is a nice start, but first 11.dxe5 dxe5 and then 12.h4 might be even stronger.

Van Rekom and Jansen give the above position as the result of a main line for Black. But it is easy to see that Black is in a terrible state, so their handling of this line gives some ammunition to those who claim that the average club player should not write an opening book.

Serious opposition

Let's move on to some serious opposition by Black. After all, we cannot expect all our opponents to simply castle into our attack or to play like an automaton that only knows one tune.

I divide the material in two parts: the main line with 4.g4 h6 5.f3 e5, and set-ups without a quick ...e5.

In the main line Black should start his queenside play with ...c6 and ...b5 as soon as possible. A move like ...♕c7 is not necessary, and even the move ...♗e7 can be delayed.

Black must always keep his eye open for a counterblow in the centre, for example, after ♘c3 has been driven away by ...b5-b4, ...d6-d5 can be very effective.

A more quiet approach for Black is the idea ...♘h7 followed by ...♗e7-g5.

Other set-ups include playing ...c6 and ...b5 without first ...e5 (Game 4), and trying to transpose into Sicilian-type positions with ...c5 (Game 5).

Move orders

Black and White can play their standard moves in different orders, and that gives room for subtleties in play.

White, for example, can start with ♕d2 and 0-0-0 (Game 1) and then decide on how to continue, but starting with ♘g1-e2-g3 (Games 2 and 3) is also an attractive idea. White then immediately brings ♘f5 in the position, posing Black some problems to solve.

Black can also be subtle with his move order. For example, directly starting queenside play leads to the following important position: after 5...e5 6.♗c3 c6 7.♘ge2 and now 7...b5.

A difficult question for White is how to deal with Black's 'threat' of playing ...b4.
Simply continuing 'normal play' with 8.♕d2 is no good: after 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5! Black is doing fine. White can play 8.♘g3 to make room for the other knight on e2, but even then Black may consider 8...b4 9.♘ce2 d5!?.
With 8.a3 White stops ...b4 for the time being, but this might make it less attractive to castle long in the future. A final interesting alternative is 8.d5. White must always consider this push carefully, because it can easily lead to a strategically inferior position.

Don't fear the Lion

In conclusion, I think that with 4.g4 and 5.f3 White can fight for an advantage on relatively unexplored grounds.
The illustrative games cover the most important lines and ideas. The first three games cover the main line, the last two Black's sidelines.
Incidentally, all five games are crushing victories for the white player. For this lion, a fearful attitude is not advised.

□ **Marc Dutreeuw**
■ **Thierry Manouck**
Paris 2006 (9)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.♗e3 e5 5.f3 c6 6.♕d2 b5 7.g4 h6

By transposition we have reached our main line. Now White faces an important choice.

8.0-0-0

On 8.♘ge2 Black can play 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5, with a good position. Interesting is 8.d5 cxd5 (the pawn sacrifice 8...b4 9.dxc6 bxc3 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7 11.♕xc3 gives some chances) 9.♘xd5 ♘xd5 10.♕xd5 ♖b8 11.0-0-0 a6, and in this Sicilian-like position, White is maybe a bit better.

8...b4

Continue development with 8...♗e7 is a good possibility, because ...b4 is even more annoying if White would play 9.♘ge2. After 9.d5 (9.h4!?) Black can again go for the messy compensation after the pawn sacrifice 9...b4 10.dxc6 bxc3 11.cxd7+ ♗xd7 12.♕xc3.

9.♘ce2 ♕a5

The immediate 9...d5 led to a great success for Black after 10.exd5?! ♘xd5 11.f4?! ♕a5 12.♔b1 exf4 13.♗xf4 ♘7f6 14.♘c1 ♗e6 15.♘b3 ♕b6 16.♗d3 a5, and Black later won in Abrahamyan-Akobian, Los Angeles 2003. However, 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘f4 is a better try.

10.♔b1 d5

11.♘g3 dxe4 12.♗c4! ♘b6

Better was 12...♗e7, because then, after 13.dxe5, Black simply plays 13...♘xe5, an option he misses after the game continuation.

13.♗b3 ♗e7 14.dxe5 ♕xe5 15.♗d4 ♕d6 16.fxe4?!

With 16.♕e2!? White keeps the attack, not

giving Black the opportunity to try to force the exchange of queens, as with his next move in the game.

16...c5! 17.♘f3!

17.♗xf6 ♕xd2 18.♖xd2 ♗xf6 promises White nothing.

17...♗xg4?

After 17...♘xg4! White should fish in muddy waters with 18.e5, for, after 18.♗xg7 ♕xd2 19.♘xd2 ♖g8 Black is doing fine.

18.e5

Now White has a very strong attack.

18...♕d7?! 18...♕c6 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♖de1+ ♔f8 22.♘h4 and White's attack is very powerful. **19.exf6 ♗xf3** The ugly 19...gxf6 was Black's last chance, but after 20.♕f4 ♗xf3 21.♕xf3 cxd4 22.♘f5 White must be winning. **20.♖he1 gxf6 21.♗xf6 0-0 22.♕xh6 ♕xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♗xf6 24.♕xf6**

Black resigned.

□ **Vitezslav Rasik**
■ **Kieran Smallbone**
Tatranske Zruby 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 c6 4.f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 h6 6.♘ge2 e5 7.♗e3 b5

As in our first game (with ♕d2 instead of ♘ge2) Black immediately lashes out with his queenside attack.

More modest is 7...♗e7. Then 8.♕d2 is of course possible. After 8...♕c7 (8...b5!?) 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♖e1 (this looks a bit strange, there is no obvious drawback to 10.♘g3) 10...b4 11.♘d1 c5 12.d5 a5 a complex struggle developed in Hamdouchi-Campora, Santo Antonio 1999.

More enterprising is 8.♘g3, which forces Black to start thinking about the threat ♘f5. If 8...g6 then 9.♕d2 poses new problems for Black.

8.♘g3

I discussed this position in the introduction. White has a difficult decision to make.

As mentioned, 8.♕d2 is not so good, because of 8...b4 9.♘d1 d5.

Interesting is 8.a3, just to 'buy' some time.

8.d5 leads again to complex positions, resembling those you nowadays often see in the Sicilian Najdorf. After 8...♗b7 (8...b4 is hardly playable with the knight on e2, after 9.dxc6 bxc3 10.cxd7+ ♗xd7 11.♘xc3 White has simply won a pawn) 9.dxc6 ♗xc6 10.♘g3 b4 (10...♘b6!?) 11.♘d5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♕a5 13.♗c4 ♘b6 14.♗xb6 ♕xb6 15.♕d3 White is a bit better.

8...b4 9.♘ce2 d5!

This standard break in the centre gives Black nice play.

10.g5 hxg5 11.♗xg5 dxe4 12.fxe4 ♕a5 13.♕d2 ♗a6 14.♘c1 ♗xf1 15.♘b3!? ♘xe4!?

Things are getting very complicated now. 15...♕a6 16.♖xf1 0-0-0 was a decent alternative.

16.♘xe4 ♕d5 17.0-0-0 ♗c4 18.♖he1 f6 19.dxe5 ♗xb3?!

Best probably was 19...♕xd2+ 20.♘bxd2 fxg5 21.♘xc4, although White is clearly better. After 19...fxg5 20.♕g2! White retains a strong attack.

20.exf6 ♕xd2+ 21.♖xd2

Even stronger was 21.♘xd2+ ♔f7 22.fxg7 ♗xg7 23.♖e7+ ♔g6 24.♘xb3 ♘e5 25.♗f4.

21...♗e6?

With 21...♘xf6 (indeed, not a pleasant move to make) 22.♘xf6+ ♔f7 23.axb3 gxf6 Black could continue the fight.

22.fxg7

1-0. After 22...♗xg7 23.♘d6+ ♔f8 24.♖xe6 White has a pawn and the attack.

□ **Willy Hendriks**
■ **Djurre den Heeten**
Dieren 2009

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3 e5 6.♗e3 ♗e7 7.♘ge2 ♘h7

Black wants to play ...♗g5 (or ...♗h4 first) but this plan is a bit time-consuming; 7...c6 is the normal move.

8.♕d2 ♗h4+

After 8...♗g5 9.0-0-0 (9.f4!?) 9...♗xe3 10.♕xe3 White is better, on 10...♕g5 White avoids the endgame with 11.f4.

9.♘g3

9...h5?

This is nonsense. For a very small positional gain (exchanging his h-pawn for White's g-pawn), Black wastes a lot of time. With the knight on g3 it makes more sense to play 9...♗g5. After 10.0-0-0 ♗xe3 11.♕xe3 ♕g5 12.♕xg5 hxg5 White is only slightly better.

10.gxh5 ♘hf6 11.0-0-0 ♘xh5 12.♘xh5 ♖xh5 13.♔b1 ♔f8 14.f4 ♗f6?! 14...exf4 15.♗xf4 ♗g5 offers Black some hope to survive. **15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♗e2**

16...♖h4 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♗g5 ♗f6 19.♗xh4 ♗xh4 20.♗g4 ♔e8 21.♕g2 ♕g5 22.♕h3

Black resigned.

□ **Zaven Andriasian**
■ **Georgios Dalaklis**
Kalamaria 2008

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6
White is doing well after 4...e5 5.g5.
5.f3 c6 6.♗e3 b5

A sound idea, starting queenside play first and keeping the option of ...e5.
7.♕d2 ♕a5 8.h4 ♗b7?!
In conjunction with the next move a wrong plan. Transposing to the main set-up with 8...e5 was the alternative.
9.♘h3 0-0-0 10.a3!
White changes plans and goes for an attack on the black king.
10...e5 11.b4! ♕c7 12.d5!

Black has no counterplay, while his king will be exposed very soon.
12...a6 13.dxc6 ♗xc6 14.a4 bxa4 15.♗xa6+ ♔b8 16.b5 ♘c5 17.bxc6 ♘xa6 18.♖b1+ ♔c8 19.♘b5
Black resigned.

□ **Robert Ris**
■ **Djurre den Heeten**
Wijk aan Zee 2007

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘bd7 4.g4 h6 5.f3 c5!?
A radical departure from the set-ups with ...e5.
6.dxc5
Transposing into a Sicilian structure. Playing in Benoni style with 6.d5 was also possible, as well as 6.♗e3 and 6.♘ge2, keeping the tension.
6...♘xc5 7.♗e3 ♕a5 8.♕d2 ♗d7 9.a3!

This game shows a clash between two different strategies: White goes all out, pushes all his pawns forward and hopes to strangle his opponent. Black has a solid position and hopes to show that White has overextended by breaking through at some moment. The white strategy prevails in this game!
9...♘e6 10.b4 ♕d8 11.♘d5 ♘c7 12.c4 e6 13.♘c3 ♗e7 14.♘ge2 ♔f8?! 15.♘d4 ♘fe8

Black starts to lose his coordination.
16.♗e2 ♗h4+ 17.♔f1 ♗f6 18.♔g2 ♖c8 19.♖ac1 a6 20.♘b3 ♘a8 21.♖hd1 ♗g5

22.c5!
All the white pieces are perfectly placed to start the action.
22...♗xe3 23.♕xe3 dxc5 24.♘xc5 ♖c7 25.♕d4 ♔e7

26.♘xb7!?
White correctly goes for the brilliancy prize, although 'normal' moves would also have sufficed.
26...♖xb7 27.♕c5+ ♔f6 28.e5+ ♔g6 29.♗d3+ f5 30.gxf5+ exf5 31.e6 ♕g5+ 32.♔h1 ♖c7 33.♗xf5+! ♕xf5 34.♖g1+ ♔f6 35.♘d5+ ♔xe6 36.♕e7+ ♔xd5 37.♖gd1+ ♕d3 38.♖xd3
Mate. A fine game by White!

CHAPTER 9

Jeroen Bosch

The Centre Game: A Romantic Weapon

Lashing out against c2 with ...♘b4

In this chapter we will enjoy a 'romantic' surprise weapon against the Centre Game. Now you may wonder whether we need a SOS against the Centre Game. 'Can't I just play 3...♘c6 (gaining a tempo) and take it from there?' is a reasonable question. My answer would be: 'Perhaps in the past you could. However, I am afraid that these days, almost anything ends up in the theoretical realm, and this has certainly happpened to the Centre Game.' Let it be a warning: a sizeable chunk (100 pages!) of *Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5* (Everyman, 2008) is taken up by Andrew Greet's expose on this early queen outing.

In *Dismantling the Sicilian: A Complete Repertoire for White* (New in Chess, 2009), Jesus de la Villa proposes an interesting philosophy for his suggested repertoire: 'Against main lines, play main lines; against secondary lines, play secondary lines; against unsound lines, play the refutation.' In his view it will be difficult to reach something against a secondary line by employing a main line, simply because your opponent will almost always have spent more time on it (at home and in the tournament hall).

For all non-professionals this is sound advice and I intend to follow it with regard to the Centre Game, which falls in de la Villa's second category I would say (after all the Scandinavian is almost respectable these

days as well). Actually the best is still to come. The secondary line I propose against the Centre Game is delightfully direct. After 3...♘c6 White plays 4.♕e3 and now either the immediate 4...♘b4!?, which would be my personal preference, or 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4!?.

Rather crude, you say?

Well perhaps, but just look at the featured games: what wouldn't you give for playing such a game in the true style of Morphy and Anderssen! Sitting behind the black pieces are Mark Hebden and Rashit Ziatdinov.

□ **Throstur Thorhallsson**
■ **Mark Hebden**
Cappelle la Grande 2005

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘b4

Moving twice with the same piece in the opening. A well-known 'sin'. However, in this case it falls under the category 'an eye for an eye'. White after all has committed (the cardinal?) sin of moving twice with her majesty in the opening. The point of the knight move is not just the threatened fork, but rather the fact that White now has to make an uncomfortable defensive move.

5.♘a3

White develops and defends against the fork. Still, the knight is awkwardly placed on a3.

While 5.♗d3 also protects c2 and develops, it is completely innocuous. Black can take on d3 or postpone this. One example: 5...b6 6.♗d2 ♗c5 7.♕g3 ♘xd3+ 8.♕xd3 (8.cxd3 ♘e7 when White cannot take – 9.♕xg7? – as 9...♖g8 10.♕xh7 ♗d4! 11.♗c3 ♖h8 traps the queen! – 12.♕xh8+ ♗xh8 13.♗xh8 ♘g6 followed by 14...♘f4) 8...♕f6 9.♘f3 ♕xb2 and Black won in Van de Linde-Rinemberg, Buenos Aires 2001.

Best is 5.♕e2! according to Andrew Greet (his exclam). He suggests that this will transpose to 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 6.♕e2. However, it seems to me that Black can do better than play 5...♘f6 and should try either 5...♗c5 (which Greet gives in a note) or 5...b6. It is for this reason that I would recommend 4...♘b4 rather than 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 when 6.♕e2 gains in strength.

Thus, 5.♕e2 and now:

– 5...♗c5 6.♘c3 ♗d4!? 7.♘b5 (perhaps 7.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘c6 9.e5 or 9.♗a3) 7...♗b6 8.c3 ♘c6 9.♘f3 ♘ge7 10.♗g5 was Litz-Buchmann, cr 2003, and now Greet gives 10...d6 rather than the game continuation (10...f6?!) 11.0-0-0 as marginally preferable for White, which is probably a matter of taste. Black also has fair chances after 11...0-0 in the upcoming struggle.

– 5...b6 6.♘c3 (6.♘f3 ♗a6 7.c4 ♘c6 and having provoked c4 Black will gain some influence over the dark squares) 6...♗a6 7.♕d1 ♗xf1 8.♔xf1 ♗c5 with interesting play.

5...♘f6

The most natural move, and considering the previous moves that is perhaps surprising in itself! Grandmaster Jozsef Pinter has essayed both 5...b6 and 5...♕e7. Both look eminently playable:

– 5...b6 6.♗d2 ♗b7 7.♗c4 ♕e7 8.0-0-0 0-0-0 9.f3 d5!? 10.♗xb4 ♕xb4 11.♗xd5 ♗xd5 12.♖xd5 ♖xd5 13.exd5 ♘f6 14.♘c2 ♗c5 15.♕d3 ♕a5 16.♘c3?! ♗xa3 17.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 18.♔b1 ♖d8 19.♕c4. The game Papp-Pinter, Balatonlelle 2006, is about equal at this stage. Pinter won after a long fight.

– 5...♕e7!? 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘b5 d6 8.♗d3 g6 9.f4 ♗g7 10.♘f3 ♘f6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♖e1 ♕d8 14.♕f2 b6 15.c4?! ♗b7 16.♗d2 a6 and Black was very harmoniously placed in Ivic-Pinter, Sibenik 2007.

6.e5 ♘fd5 7.♕e4 d6!

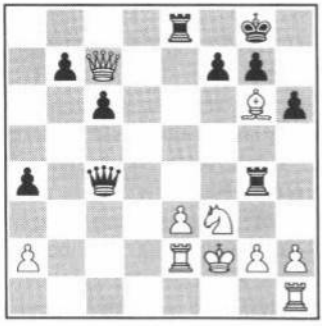
8.c3

Instead 8.exd6+ ♗e6 9.dxc7 ♕xc7 10.♘f3 0-0-0 provides excellent compensation, as Andrew Greet also notes in *Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5*. White must have counted on the text: he 'wins' a piece, but Hebden has accurately seen that after

8...dxe5! 9.cxb4 ♗xb4+ he has more than enough for the piece. Black has two pawns already, while White's king is unsafe. Not a bad deal! **10.♗d2** 10.♔e2 0-0 is terrible too. **10...♗xd2+ 11.♔xd2 0-0!**

Black is clearly on top. I am not going to analyse the remainder too deeply. Suffice to say that while play was certainly not faultless the final result is a fair reflection of how we should evaluate the diagrammed position. White should definitely avoid this!

12.♔e1 c6 13.♗e2 ♕f6 14.♘c4 ♖e8 15.♘e3 ♗e6 16.♘f3 ♖ad8 Hebden just manoeuvres patiently as if material is of no concern. It is true that the mere fact that White has lost his right to castle is a long term disadvantage here. **17.♕xe5 ♕g6 18.♔f1** 18.♕g5. **18...♗f5 19.♕g3 ♕f6 20.♖e1** 20.♘xf5 ♕xf5 and ...♕c2 and ...♘f4 are hard to meet. For example: 21.♘d4 (21.♖c1 ♘f4−+; 21.♗c4 ♕c2 22.♘e5 ♘f4 23.♗xf7+? ♔h8−+) 21...♕e4 22.♖d1 ♘f4−+. **20...♘xe3+ 21.fxe3 ♕xb2** Ironically disaster now strikes from the other side. **22.♕f4 ♗g6 23.♔f2 ♖e4 24.♕c7?!** 24.♕g5 ♖d5? 25.♖b1!. **24...♖de8 25.♔g3 ♕b4 26.♗d1 h6 27.♗b3 a5 28.♖e2 a4 29.♗c2 ♖g4+ 30.♔f2 ♕c4 31.♗xg6?!**



31...♖xg2+! 32.♔xg2 ♕xe2+ 33.♔g3 fxg6 The pawns are worth more than the knight. Note that Black's king is entirely safe. **34.♖e1 ♕xa2 35.♖d1 ♕e6 36.♕xb7 ♕f6 37.♖c1 ♖xe3 38.♕xc6?** 38.♕b8+ ♔h7 39.♕f4. **38...♖xf3+! 39.♕xf3 ♕g5+ 40.♕g4 ♕xc1** The queen ending is winning. **41.♕xa4 ♕g1+ 42.♔h3 ♔h7 43.♕d7 h5 44.♕e6 ♕f1+ 45.♔g3 g5 46.♕e7 ♕g1+ 47.♔f3 ♕g4+ 48.♔f2 ♕f4+ 49.♔g2 g4 50.♕e8 ♕f3+ 51.♔g1 g3 52.hxg3 ♕xg3+** White could have safely resigned here. **53.♔h1 ♕f3+**

54.♔g1 ♕f5 55.♔h2 ♕g6 56.♕d8 ♔h6 57.♕d2+ ♕g5 58.♕d6+ ♕f6 59.♕b8 g5 60.♔g2 h4 61.♕e8 ♕b2+ 62.♔g1 ♕d4+ 63.♔h1 ♕d5+ 64.♔g1 ♔g7 65.♕e7+ ♔g6 66.♕e8+ ♔f5 67.♕c8+ ♔f4 68.♔h2 ♕e5 69.♔g2 ♕e2+ 70.♔h1 g4 71.♕c1+ ♔g3 72.♕e3+ A final stalemate trick. **72...♕f3+** White resigned.

□ **Rudolf Meessen**
■ **Rashit Ziatdinov**
Moscow 2009

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4

This is clearly related to 4...♘b4 and therefore deserves to be incorporated. Note that 5...♗b4 6.♗d2 0-0 7.0-0-0 is the main line. Black is theoretically OK, but he must be well-prepared to prove it. The problem in meeting such lines usually is that your opponent will have a lot of over the board experience (and more theoretical knowledge) to find his way in the complications that will certainly follow. Thus one of the main lines continues: 7...♖e8 8.♕g3 ♖xe4! 9.a3! – don't try this at the board without having done so at home!

6.♕e2

For 6.♗d3 see the next game.

6...b6

This is more logical than the passive 6...d6 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0

when 9.e5 gives just the type of position that those playing 3.♕xd4 aim for.

– 9...♘e8 10.a3 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♗g5 14.exd6 ♘xd6 favoured White slightly in A.Smith-Gormally, England tt 2003/04. However, Andrew Greet correctly points out that 10.♕e4! a5 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♘f3 ♗e6 13.h4!? 'with decent attacking chances' is even stronger.

– 9...♘d7 10.exd6 ♗xd6 11.♗xd6 cxd6 12.♖xd6 ♖e8 offers Black some compensation. For example: 13.♕d2 ♕a5 14.♔b1 (14.♗c4) 14...♘xa2! 15.♘xa2?! ♖e1+ 16.♘c1 ♕xd2 17.♖xd2 ♖xf1. However, 12.a3! is awkward to meet. 12...♖e8 13.♕d2 ♘c6 14.♕xd6 and now 14...♕b6? just loses after 15.♘d5 ♕xf2 16.♘h3 ♕h4 17.♘c7.

7.♕d1

● 7.♗g5 ♗a6 8.♕d2 ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 ♗e7 10.a3 (10.♘f3 0-0; but 10.e5 ♘g4 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.a3 ♘c6 13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.♘f3 0-0 15.♕f4 must be somewhat better for White) 10...♘c6 11.♖d1 (11.e5!? ♘xe5 12.♖e1) 11...d6 12.♘ge2 0-0 is about equal, Sena-Lewis, New York 1999.

On move 9 Black can improve with 9...h6!? 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.a3 ♘c6 12.♘d5 (otherwise Black has no problems whatsoever)

12...♕xb2 13.♘xc7+ ♔d8 14.♖d1 ♔xc7 15.♕xd7+ ♔b8

16.♕xc6 (16.♕e8+ ♔b7 17.♕d7+ repeats, while 17.♖d7+ ♔a6 18.♕xa8 ♕c1+ 19.♔e2 ♕xc2+ wins for Black) 16...♗c5!? and Black appears to be alright in this position. He is regaining his pawn on c2. And while his king may be anything but safe, White's kingside is completely undeveloped:

– 17.♖d7? ♕c1+ 18.♔e2 ♕xc2+ forces a shameful retreat 19.♖d2.

– 17.♕d5 ♕xc2 18.♘e2 ♖e8.

– 17.♕a4 ♖c8 or 17...b5.

● 7.e5!? is Andrew Greet's recommendation for White.

7...♘fd5 (7...♗a6 8.♕d1! ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 ♘g8 10.♘f3 'with some initiative' (Greet) looks like the lesser evil) 8.♘e4! ♗a6 (8...♗b7 9.a3) 9.c4 'leading to a most peculiar position, somewhat reminiscent of a Scotch. I think I would prefer Whites chances as Black's knights are rather clumsily placed and are likely to be driven backwards in the near future.' (*Dangerous Weapons: 1.e4 e5*, p.324). Indeed, I agree with Greet's assessment, because although after 9...♘c6 the hasty 10.♘d6+ leads to equality after 10...cxd6 11.exd6+ ♗e7, White can improve with 10.a3! ♘de7 11.♘f3 (11.♘f6+ gxf6 12.exf6 d5) 11...♘g6 (11...♘f5 12.♘f6+ gxf6 13.exf6+) 12.♘f6+ (12.♘d6+ ♗xd6 13.exd6+ ♔f8 14.♗g5 f6 15.♗e3 ♘ce5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5) 12...gxf6 13.exf6+ with superior chances. Let me reiterate that 7.e5 is the reason why I would prefer 4...♘b4 to 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4.

7...♗c5 8.a3 ♘c6 9.♗g5?! If 9.♘f3? then ♘g4, or 9.♗d3 0-0. **9...h6 10.♗h4 0-0**

Black is very comfortable. He is considerably ahead in development. Not surprising considering the fact that the white queen went from d1 to d4-e3-e2 back to d1!

11.♘f3 ♖e8 12.♗c4 g5 More or less forcing White to sac a piece, but risky. **13.♘xg5** 13.♗g3 ♘xe4 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕d5+ ♔g6 16.♘xe4 ♕e7. **13...hxg5 14.♗xg5**

14...♘xe4!? Played in great style! **15.♗xf7+! ♔g7 16.♗xd8 ♗xf2+!?** Ziatdinov did not intend to go down in a worse ending after 16...♘xc3+ 17.♗xe8 ♘xd1 18.♖xd1 ♘xd8 19.♗xd7. **17.♔f1 ♗a6+**

18.♘e2

The crazy computer reply 18.♘b5! objectively refutes Black's romantic 14th move. But we don't go scrutinizing Morphy's games with computer engines either or do we? 18...♗xb5+ (18...♖axd8 19.♗d5 ♗xb5+ 20.c4) 19.c4+−.

18...♖axd8 19.♗xe8 ♘d4! 20.♗h5

Considering his opponent's inspired efforts so far, the forcing 20.♕d3!? ♗xd3 21.cxd3 ♖xe8 22.dxe4 ♖xe4 23.♘g3 ♗xg3 24.hxg3 was advisable and White can at least not lose (he is better but not winning).

20...♘f5 21.♕c1 ♖h8! Black has knight and bishop for queen, rook and pawn, but he insists on the initiative. 21...♘e3+?! 22.♕xe3 ♗xe3 23.♔e1. **22.g4 ♘e3+ 23.♕xe3 ♗xe3 24.♔g2 ♘f2?!** 24...♗b7!. **25.♔f3?** 25.♖hf1!. **25...♗c5** Black is better now. He still has a slight material disadvantage but his pieces cooperate in a marvellous way. **26.♖he1 ♖f8+ 27.♔g3?** 27.♘f4 ♘h3∓. **27...♘e4+ 28.♔g2 ♖f2+ 29.♔h3 ♗xe2** And White resigned. He is powerless against Black's numerous attacking ideas.

□ **Albert Sanfeliu Fabregas**
■ **Mark Hebden**
La Pobla de Lillet 2005

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕e3 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘b4 6.♗d3

6...♗e7

6...♘xd3+ is playable but not too ambitious. However, 6...d5 is also strong, after 7.♘xd5 (7.exd5+ ♕e7 8.♘ge2 ♕xe3 9.♗xe3 ♘fxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♗d2 ♘b4 was equal in Ashby-Tebb, Hastings 1995. Also good was 7...♗e7) 7...♘fxd5 8.exd5+ ♕e7 (8...♗e7 9.c4 0-0 10.♘e2 ♗c5! 11.♕g3 ♗d6 12.♗f4 ♗xf4 13.♘xf4 ♖e8+ 14.♘e2 ♗g4! – 14...♕e7! – 15.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16.♕xg4 ♘c2+ 17.♔d2 ♘xa1 and Black won in R.Schmidt-Karim, Malaga 2009) 9.♗e4 f5 10.a3 ♕xe4 (10...fxe4 11.axb4 ♕xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♕xb2 13.♕xe4+ is also fairly equal) 11.axb4 ♗xb4+ 12.c3 ♗c5 13.♕xe4+ fxe4 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 0-0 with even chances. Barrionuevo-L.Bronstein, Tres de Febrero ch-ARG 2003.

7.e5 White takes up the gauntlet. **7...♘g4 8.♕e4 d5!**

9.exd6 ♕xd6 Black is slightly better at this stage. **10.♗f4?! ♕c5 11.♗g3 ♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 0-0 13.♕b5 ♗f5 14.h3 ♘f6 15.♕xc5 ♗xc5 16.0-0-0**

Black has superior chances in this ending (queenless middlegame) owing to his pair of bishops. One would now expect the grandmaster to grind away and slowly overcome his opponent. However, that's not how Mark Hebden plays such a position:

16...♖fe8 17.♘d5?! Erroneously ignoring his undeveloped kingside. 17.♘f3. **17...♘e4! 18.♘xc7 ♘xg3 19.fxg3 ♗e3+ 20.♔b1 ♖ac8!** 20...♖ec8 21.♖d5! ♗e4 22.♖e5. **21.♖f1 ♗g6?!** 21...♖e5!−+. **22.♘xe8 ♖xc2 23.♔a1 ♗d4 24.♖b1?** 24.a4

24...♗xb2+ and mate follows. White resigned.

CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

Check Like a Patzer in the Scandinavian

Let's play 3...♕e5+ (or 3...♕e6+)

One time, when I was still a boy, I was watching a game between two players in a bar. The player with black played the Scandinavian Defence and immediately gave a check on his third move. I told him that this was not such a good move, but he clearly had his own ideas. At the time I didn't appreciate that in a 'coffeehouse game' people care not only about the result, and that he probably just enjoyed giving a check. But I did understand that making many moves with your queen is not a good idea in the opening, so I was right in condemning 3...♕e5+. Or was I?

There are actually arguments in favour of this patzer move. It is true that the queen on e5 will have to move again, so Black must lose another tempo. However, from a5 (3...♕a5 is the traditional main line) the queen normally also has to move again, because of a threat by ♗d2. Currently the most popular move is 3...♕d6 (as reported by Tiviakov in SOS-6) but there the queen is vulnerable to an attack too, for example by ♘c4 or ♗f4. And while after Kogan's favourite retreat 3...♕d8 (see SOS-4) the queen is rather safe, she is also standing on a square where a rook wants to go. In general, a good place to 'hide' your queen in the Scandinavian is c7, and Black can go there just as fast from e5 as from a5, d6 or d8. In fact, there is an advantage in going to c7 via e5: this forces White to put a piece on e2,

which interferes with White's normal plan of ♘f3 and ♗c4 (or ♗d3).
Of course 3...♕e5+ is not the panacea which guarantees you a good position with black. Statistics suggest the opposite – White is scoring very well after this move. Yet, the first game of this article, McShane-Becker, will demonstrate that the check does deserve some respect: the top-GM quickly found himself in a worse position after playing some natural moves with white.
Now if you really like the obscure of the obscure, the secret surprise of SOS, the move that even Basman, Bücker and Welling never tried, go to the second game of this article, Cernousek-Popchev, and meet 3...♕e6+. I didn't expect this move to be more than just a legal move allowed by the FIDE rules of chess, but to my surprise I discovered that it has its hidden points.

□ **Luke McShane**
■ **Marc Becker**
France tt 2005

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕e5+

4.♗e2

The best move. Other possibilities:
– 4.♘ce2. Equality on move 4 with black, yeah!
– 4.♕e2 ♕xe2+ (Black can also try 4....♕a5, since the white queen is not better placed on e2 than it was on d1) 5.♗xe2 ♘f6 6.♘f3, and now most accurate might be 6...a6 since it's useful to prevent ♘b5 (or ♗b5), though 6...g6 and 6...♗f5 are also fine. White still has a slight lead in development in this endgame, but it will be difficult to transform it into anything tangible.
– 4.♘ge2. After this move I suggest to play a Scandinavian with ...♕a5, giving White ♘ge2 as an extra move. That could be useful for White after a quick ...♗f5, since he has ♘g3 and f4 then, a well-known plan in this opening. So Black should refrain from ...♗f5 as long as White can play ♘g3. With the bishop on c8, ♘g3 is not so dangerous (Black can continue with ...g6, ...♗g7, ...0-0, ...♖d8 etc.), so White will probably play g3, as he did in Rasmussen-Madsen, Obro 2006: 4...♘f6 5.d4 ♕a5 6.g3 c6 (here 6...♗f5 7.♗g2 ♘c6 is an interesting plan, and even 6...h5 might be good) 7.♗g2 ♗f5 8.♗d2 e6 (8...♕a6 is safer) 9.d5 ♕b6 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.0-0 ♘bd7 12.♗e3 and now, instead of 12...♗c5? 13.♘a4±, 12...♕a6 would not have been so bad for Black.

4...c6

Black players have sometimes played 4...♗g4 5.d4 ♗xe2 6.♘gxe2, but this doesn't really help in the tempo department.

5.d4 ♕c7

6.♗g5

Played, either with very aggressive intentions, or to discourage Black from developing his bishop to g4. The 'main line' (if there is one) goes 6.♘f3 ♗f5 7.♘e5 (here 7.0-0 e6 8.♗e3 ♘d7 9.♕d2 ♘gf6 10.h3 ♗d6 11.♘h4 ♗g6 12.♘xg6 hxg6 gave Black a solid position in Cheparinov-Garcia Ortega, Andorra 2002, while 7.d5 ♘f6 8.♘d4 ♗d7 9.0-0 a6 10.♗f3 cxd5 11.♖e1 ♘c6 12.♗g5 0-0-0 13.♗xf6 exf6 14.♘xd5 was clearly better for White in Fedorchuk-Oussama, Villeneuve Tolosane 2006 – this is the most dangerous variation for Black – 11...♗c6 is a clear improvement, but so is 11.♗g5) 7...♘d7 (7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.h4 is clearly good for White) 8.♗f4 ♘xe5 9.♗xe5, and now:

– 9...♕b6 10.♘a4 ♕a5+ 11.c3 f6 12.b4 ♕d5 13.♗g3 0-0-0 (13...e5 14.dxe5 ♕xg2 15.♗f3 ♕h3 16.♕e2 ♔f7 17.0-0-0 is a bit messy but still good for White, for example 17...a5 18.♖d4! threatening 19.♖h4; 13...♕xg2 14.♗f3 ♕h3 15.♘c5 e5 16.♘xb7 e4 17.♗e2) 14.0-0 e5 15.dxe5 fxe5 16.♕b3 b5? 17.♘c5 ♗xc5 18.bxc5 ♘f6? 19.c4 and White won in Shaw-Zeidler, Plovdiv 2003.
– 9...♕a5 10.0-0 e6 11.a3 a6 12.b4 ♕d8 13.♘a4 ♘f6 14.♘c5 was good for White in Baklan-Ermenkov, Balaguer 2005.
– I think that the untried 9...♕d7 is best here, for example 10.d5 (10.♕d2 f6 11.♗g3 e6 – 11...h5!? – 12.0-0-0 0-0-0±) 10...f6 11.♗g3 0-0-0 12.0-0 e5 13.dxe6 ♕xe6 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.cxd3 ♗d6 16.♖e1 ♕d7 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6, when White has attacking chances but Black has a structural advantage.

6...♗f5 7.♕d2 e6

7...♘f6 8.♘f3 e6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘h4 ♗g6 11.f4 f5 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.a3 ♗g7 14.♖ad1 0-0 15.♔h1 ♖ad8 gave an equal position in Conquest-Spain, New Zealand 1999.

8.♘f3 h6 9.♗h4 ♘d7

10.♘e5

This doesn't give an advantage, but otherwise Black just develops with ...♗d6, ...♘gf6 and castles.

10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♗e7 12.♗g3

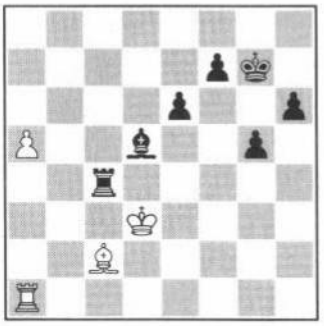
This looks logical, since 12.♗xe7 helps Black develop, but it is wrong for concrete reasons.

12...♖d8 13.♕e3

13...♕b6! 14.♕xb6
After 14.♕c1 ♗g5 15.f4 ♗e7 16.♗f2 ♗c5 White also has some problems to solve.
14...axb6 15.♖c1 ♗b4 16.0-0 ♘e7
Black's pieces are more active, so White has to fight for equality here.
17.♘b1 b5 18.c3 ♗c5 19.♖fd1 0-0 20.a3 ♘d5

21.♘d2?
A blunder. After 21.c4 bxc4 22.♖xc4 ♗a7 23.♖cc1 White's position is still defensible.
21...♘e3! 22.fxe3 ♗xe3+ 23.♗f2 ♗xd2
Black is a pawn up, with active pieces, so he should win now.

24.♖a1 ♗c2 25.♖f1 ♖d5 26.♗d4 ♗b3
26...♖xd4! 27.cxd4 ♗e3+ 28.♔h1 ♗xd4 is easily winning for Black.
27.♗f3 ♖d7 28.♔f2 ♗g5 29.♔g3 ♗e7 30.♗e4 ♖a8 31.♔f2 ♖a4 32.♗f3 ♖a8 33.g3 ♗d8 34.♖ae1 ♗c7 35.♖g1 ♖ad8 36.g4
36...c5! was the threat. White could have prevented this with 36.♖g2, when there is still a lot of work for Black to do.
36...♗d5 37.♗e2 ♗c4 38.♗f3 c5! 39.♗xc5 ♖d2+ 40.♔g3 ♖8d3 41.♖e3 ♖xe3 42.♗xe3 ♗xe5+ 43.♗f4 ♗xf4+ 44.♔xf4 ♖xb2 Now it should be easy.
45.♖d1 g5+ 46.♔e5 ♔g7 47.♗xb7 ♖xh2 48.♖a1 ♖h3 49.♗e4 ♗e2 50.♔d4 ♗xg4 51.c4 bxc4 52.a4 c3 53.a5 ♗f3 54.♗d3 ♗d5 55.♗c2 ♖h4+ 56.♔xc3 ♖c4+ 57.♔d3



57...♖xc2
A totally unnecessary sacrifice. Probably Becker missed that White can escape to a queen ending.
58.♔xc2 h5 59.♖g1 ♔g6 60.♖d1 h4 61.♖xd5 exd5 62.a6 h3 63.a7 h2 64.a8♕ h1♕ Fortunately for Black he is still winning. **65.♕g8+ ♔f6 66.♕d8+ ♔f5 67.♕c8+ ♔f4 68.♕c7+ ♔g4 69.♕xf7 ♕e4+ 70.♔b2 ♕e5+ 71.♔a3 ♕e3+ 72.♔a2 d4 73.♕d7+ ♔g3 74.♕d6+ ♕f4 75.♕g6 g4 76.♕c2 ♕f2 77.♔a1 ♕f1+ 78.♔a2 d3 79.♕c3 ♔g2 80.♔a3 ♕e2 81.♕c4 ♕f3 82.♔a4 d2 83.♕c2 ♕e2 84.♕c6+ ♔g1 85.♕b6+ ♔f1 86.♕f6+ ♕f3 87.♕a6+ ♔g2**
White resigned.

□ **Lukas Cernousek**
■ **Milko Popchev**
Brno 2006

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕e6+

Both Emms and Plaskett mention 3...♕e5+ in their books about the Scandinavian, and analyse it seriously (as opposed to most other books about the opening), but even for them 3...♕e6+ is a bridge too far, or at least they ignore the move, like all authors do. I can't blame them – e6 is a stupid square for a queen, especially with the pawn still on e7.

However, again there is a point to the patzer check: Black will attack the pawn at g2, and defending it will cause some slight inconvenience for White.

4.♗e2

4.♕e2 ♕xe2+ is the same as after 3....♕e5, though in this case 4...♘f6 looks fine too.

4.♘ge2 has not been played in any rated game. Now, leaving the queen on e6 for a while is not so stupid: a sensible continuation is 4...♘f6 5.d4 g6 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖d8 and Black can be happy with his position.

4...♕g6 5.♘f3

In Pessoa-Laurent, email 2005, White was a little better after 5.♗f3 ♘f6 6.d4 c6 7.♘ge2 ♗g4 8.♗xg4 ♕xg4 9.0-0.

5...♕xg2

This looks a bit like the Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Najdorf. Just like there White obviously has good compensation, but he still has to prove it.

Of course there is a difference too, say a hundred pages of theory in Nunn's Najdorf volume on 6.♗g5.

6.♖g1 ♕h3 7.♗c4

Threatening to take on f7. In Lupulescu-Andonov, Vrnjacka Banja 2004, an interesting position arose after 7.d4 ♕d7 8.♘e5 ♕d8. Probably Steinitz, who believed in the strength of the starting position, would have liked to be Black here. He had a point, but there are limits, and even though the game ended in a draw in 22 moves, instead of repeating this I recommend the solid 7...c6.

7...e6

7...h6 8.d4 c6 is more careful, preventing a lot of knight moves.

8.d4

8...♘f6?!

Now Black's queen will be in an awkward position. This also holds true for 8...c6 9.♗f1 ♕h5 10.♖g5 ♕h6 11.♖f5! ♕g6 12.♘h4 ♕g1 13.♖xf7! ♔xf7 14.♘f3 ♕h1 15.♘e4 ♘d7 16.♘g3+–, which leaves 8...h6, when 9.♘b5 ♘a6 10.♗f4 ♕f5 11.♘xc7+ ♘xc7 12.♗xc7 ♗d7 is only a little better for White.

9.♖g3 ♕h5 10.♖g5 ♕h3 11.♗f1 ♕h6

12.d5?!

Cernousek could have taken a draw by repetition here, but he rightly wanted more. One option would be to win back the pawn with 12.♖c5 ♕g6 13.♖xc7 ♘bd7, but this is not so bad for Black.

White has something stronger: 12.♖e5 ♕g6 13.♗g5!, when 14.♗d3 will be hard to meet.

12.d5 opens the position, but loses some time, which Black uses to catch up in development.

12...♗d6 13.♗b5+ ♗d7 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♖g4 ♕h5 16.♖xg7

White has won back the pawn, but lost the initiative.

16...♘c6 17.♗g5 ♖f8 18.♗xf6 ♖xf6 19.♘e4 ♖g6?!

Instead 19...♖f7 is equal.

20.♖g8+ ♗f8 21.♘fg5

The forcing variation 21.♖xg6 ♕xg6 22.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 23.♘e5+ ♔e7 24.♘xg6+ hxg6 25.♗xc6 bxc6 26.c3 gives White a nice endgame.

21...♕h6 22.♕f3 0-0-0

23.♘f7?

Now Black's pieces become very much alive. White had to swap the rooks, with an equal positon.

23...♖xg8! 24.♘xh6 ♖g1+ 25.♗f1 ♘d4 26.♕d3

26...♗xh6?

Probably played without much thinking, otherwise Black might have gone for 26...♗a4! 27.b3 ♗b5 28.c4 ♗b4+ 29.♘d2 ♗e8! and there is no defence anymore.

27.♖d1?

Here 27.♘d6+! cxd6 28.♕xd4 holds.

27...e5 28.c3 ♗g4 29.cxd4 ♖xd4 30.♕xd4 exd4 31.♖xd4 ♗g7

This endgame with two strong black bishops and the annoying pin on f1 is very hard to defend for White.

32.♖d2 ♗e5 33.♘g3 ♗f3 34.♖d3 ♗g2 35.♔e2 ♗xf1+ 36.♘xf1 ♗xb2 37.♖h3 ♖g7 38.f4 ♖f7 39.♔e3? ♗c1+

White resigned.

In conclusion, while 3...♕e5+ is a patzer move, it is certainly playable, and in our main game it posed problems to a strong grandmaster. The best try for White to get more than a slight advantage seems to be the variation with 7.d5.

The check on e6 looks even more peculiar, but might be preferable. You have to be willing to defend the position after 5...♕xg2, but if you're careful you might remain with a safe extra pawn or obtain a counterattack. Now, isn't that a real Viking raid?

CHAPTER 11

Dorian Rogozenco

King's Indian: A Dutch-KID?

The knight jump 6...♘e4

In a recent tournament after the moves 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 I wanted to continue automatically with the standard short castle (6.0-0, which is by far the most popular continuation), but suddenly a strange thought crossed my mind: what if my opponent will play 6...♘e4? (Isn't this a clear influence of the SOS-series?) Having failed to find a quick refutation of the knight jump, I started to get a bit nervous. Actually the whole situation of thinking too long at such an early stage was somewhat annoying. I certainly knew that the position after 6.0-0 was played thousands of times, but I didn't recall ever seeing the answer 6...♘e4. Just in case, I decided to prevent 6...♘e4 by playing 6.♘c3, although I was conscious that 6.♘c3 can limit White's choice in some variations.

At home I discovered that the move 6...♘e4 had indeed been played a few times in practice. More importantly, I discovered that 6...♘e4 is by no means a bad move, especially considering its surprise value! I am now ready to share my findings with you.

In a way 6...♘e4 is designed to 'punish' White for not developing his knight to c3. Of course, White may later exchange the opponent's knight (by playing at some moment ♘c3, ♘bd2 or ♘fd2), but generally the exchange of a pair of knights should be favourable for Black. For instance, in the King's

Indian there are variations where Black plays ...♗f5 in order to prepare the exchange of knights with ♘f6-e4.

Another idea of 6...♘e4 is the preparation of e7-e5. After all, the knight jump to e4 has opened the long diagonal and Black doesn't need the usual preparatory moves (...♘bd7 or ...♘c6) in order to advance the e-pawn to e5.

Finally, after 7.♕c2 Black must support its centralized knight with the f-pawn. In that case we have a Dutch Leningrad-like pawn structure, yet, there are no direct transpositions to any major variation from the Dutch Defence – mainly because in the Dutch Black is rarely allowed to play ♘f6-e4 so quickly.

7.♕c2

A logical answer – White is trying to use the instability of the knight on e4. Other moves:

● 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 c5 is certainly not problematic for Black.

● 7.♘bd2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 c5 (a reasonable alternative is 8...c5) 9.♗c3 ♕e7 10.e4 ♗g4 11.d5 and a draw was agreed in Paunovic-Peev, Pancevo 1989.

Black can either continue with 11...f5, or with 11...a5; in both cases he has a normal KID-like position.

● 7.b3 ♘c6 8.♗b2, and now:

– A game between two Soviet masters took an interesting course: 8...♗g4 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♘c5

11.♘a3 d5!? 12.♖b1 ♘d7 13.f4 ♘f6 14.♘c2 e6 15.♕e2 ♘e7 16.g4 ♖e8 17.♖fd1 c6 18.♘e1 a5 19.c5 ♘d7 20.♘d3 a4 21.♗c3 axb3 22.axb3 ♘c8 23.♕d2 ♘a7 24.♗a5 ♕e7 25.♘e5 ♘b5 26.b4 ♘xe5 27.fxe5 f6 28.♖e1 fxe5 29.dxe5 ♖f8 and it turned out that strategically Black had completely outplayed his opponent, Zaid-Petrushin, Cheliabinsk 1975.

– A much more recent example saw 8...f5 9.♘bd2 ♘xd2 10.♕xd2 e5 11.d5 ♘b8 12.♖ac1 ♕e7 13.♗a3 ♘a6 14.b4 f4 15.e4 g5 16.♘e1 ♗d7 17.f3 h5 18.♘d3 ♗h6 19.c5 g4

20.c6 (Black is also better after 20.fxg4 hxg4 21.c6 bxc6 22.dxc6 ♗e6 23.b5 ♕f6! 24.bxa6 f3) 20...bxc6 21.dxc6 gxf3 22.♗xf3

♗h3 23.♗g2 ♗xg2 24.♕xg2 f3 25.♖xf3 ♗xc1 26.♗xc1 ♕e6 27.b5 ♘c5 28.♘xc5 dxc5 29.♖d3 ♖ad8 30.♕d2? (a blunder in a difficult position) 30...♕f6 and White resigned in Bartel-Jakubiec, Ustron 2007.

● 7.♘fd2 ♘xd2 8.♕xd2 ♘c6 9.e3 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.♘c3 f5

The position should be about equal. Now the game Kamilov-Makarov, Moscow 2006, continued 12.f4 e4 13.h4 a6 14.b3 h6 15.♗b2 ♕e8 16.b4 ♗d7 17.♖fd1 g5 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.♔f2 ♕g6 20.♖h1 ♔f7 21.♘e2 ♖h8 22.♗xg7 ♕xg7 23.♖ac1 ♖ag8 24.♖xh8 ♖xh8 25.♘g1 gxf4 26.exf4 ♘g8 27.♖c3 ♘f6 and Black's attack soon decided the issue.

7...f5

This position belongs to the Dutch Defence (Leningrad Variation) rather than to the King's Indian Defence, although a knight on e4 at such an early stage makes the position unique in a way.

8.d5

White can try several other moves:

– 8.b3 ♘c6 9.♗b2 e5 is equal.

– 8.♖d1 ♘d7 9.♘e1 e5!? 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe4 fxe4 12.♕xe4 ♕f6 with compensation for the pawn.

– 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 (strangely enough, this recapture is considered by my computer as the best option, and it was also played by a GM. On the other hand, with the white pieces I would be rather skeptical about damaging my pawn structure like this. 9.♕xc3 e5 leads to approximate equality, since 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♘xe5 ♘d7 12.f4 ♕e7 favours Black) 9...e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗a3 ♖e8 12.e4 (White's initiative is short-termed) 12...♘c6 13.♖ab1 ♕f6 14.♕e2 and the draw was agreed in Neelotpal-Singh, Mumbai 2009. Black is better after 14...f4.

– 8.♘bd2 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗b4 (safer is 11.♖ad1 ♕e7 12.♗g5 ♗f6 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 14.♕c3, and a draw was agreed in Salo-Vakeva, Espoo 1998, 14...♘c6=) 11...♖c8 12.♖ad1 ♕f6 13.e4 f4 14.gxf4 ♕xf4 15.♕a4 ♘c6 16.♗d2 ♕f8 17.♗g5 h6 18.♗h4 ♗g4 19.♖d3 g5 20.♗g3 ♖ad8 21.♖b3

Here in the game Gabriel-Pfeifer, Stuttgart 1993, Black unnecessarily sacrificed the b7

pawn. After the simple 21...♗c8 Black's position would have been preferable.

8...e5

The alternatives 8...♘a6 and 8...♘d7 look perfectly playable too.

9.♘e1

Aiming for a closed position. White can also take. After 9.dxe6 ♘c6 10.♘bd2 ♘c5 11.♘b3 ♘xe6 12.♗d2 (or 12.e3 a5 with counterplay) we reach the diagrammed position.

Now the best way for Black to continue is 12...a5 13.♗c3 a4 14.♘bd2 ♕e7 15.e3 ♗d7 with a complicated, double-edged position.

9...♘f6

Deserving of attention is 9...♘c5 10.b4 ♘cd7 11.♗b2 a5 12.a3 e4, and, although it may look like Black lost some time with the knight, in fact White's knight on e1 is also misplaced, while the early advance of White's queenside pawns may offer Black targets for an attack.

10.♘c3 ♘bd7 11.♘d3 e4 12.♘f4 ♘e5 13.♕b3

If 13.b3 Black simply answers 13...♕e7. After the queen move let's continue our analysis with a few more plausible moves:

13...c5!? 14.f3 exf3 15.exf3 ♖e8 16.♗d2 ♖b8 17.♖ae1 a6 18.a4 ♗d7

Such a position is difficult to evaluate without practical material. It is clear that both sides have their chances. Due to the fact that White's position contains sufficient weaknesses, I believe that Black should always be able to find some counterplay in any kind of complications. Notice that after 19.♘e6 ♗xe6 20.dxe6 Black can take the pawn with 20...♖xe6, since, after 21.f4, he has 21...♘c6 22.♖xe6 ♘d4.

CHAPTER 12

Alexander Finkel

Pirc for Endgame Lovers

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5!?

Usually when White adopts the Austrian Attack versus the Pirc he is in for a sharp game (see for example our SOS line with 5.a3 in SOS-1, Chapter 2, p.22). In this article I will concentrate on a different approach, for after 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 we seem to skip the middlegame and enter right from the opening into a (slightly favourable?!) ending.

At first sight, White's attitude appears to be quite odd: not only does he initiate an early trade of queens, but he is also willing to give up the right to castle and waste an additional tempo on 8.♔e1 to deal with the ...♘f2 threat. However, White's strategy is built on solid positional ground: Black's knight usually ends up on h6, restricted by White's pawns on h3 and g4; the dark-squared bishop is (temporarily) rather passive on g7; and the same applies to the other bishop on c8. At the same time all White's minor pieces are destined to be developed on active and comfortable positions, while his king finds a safe haven on f2. Sounds like a paradise for endgame lovers, doesn't it?

By the way, it is remarkable that this line has been played by such attackers as David Bronstein, Dragoljub Velimirovic and Jonny Hector.

Unfortunately, Black also has some trumps up his sleeve: after 5.e5 he may just calmly retreat with the knight to d7, and White probably has

nothing better than to switch to a hyper-aggressive mode with 6.♘f3 0-0 7.h4. This is a highly interesting line which I hope to cover in one of the next issues of SOS, but is not our cup of tea within the framework of this article.

□ **Aleksei Holmsten**
■ **Marat Dzhumaev**
Ubeda 2000

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.f4 ♘f6 5.e5!?

Despite the fact that, objectively, this line promises White no opening advantage, White's results in it are quite impressive. So, we may conclude that Black's task to reach equality is much more difficult than it appears at first sight.

5...dxe5 6.dxe5

Avoiding the ending with 6.fxe5?! is dubious. In Dolzhikova-Borzov, Alushta 2006, Black was slightly better after 6...♘d5 7.♗c4 ♗e6 8.♕f3 c6 9.♘ge2 0-0 10.♘xd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♕xd5 12.0-0 ♕xf3 13.♖xf3 c5.

6...♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4

An active knight move, rather than the passive 7...♘fd7?! 8.♘f3 c6 9.♗e3 ♘b6 10.♗d3 0-0 11.♔e2 f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.g3 ♗e6 14.♘e4 ♘8d7 15.♘xf6+ exf6 16.♖he1, Gagunashvili-Spasov, Izmir 2002.

8.♔e1

8...c6!?

Covering the squares b5 and d5. For 8...♘c6 see the next game.

Another reasonable option is to push 8...f6 right away, intending to put the knight on c6: 9.h3 ♘h6 10.exf6 exf6, and now:

– 11.g4 ♗e6 12.♘f3 ♘c6 13.♗b5 0-0-0 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♔f2±, Velimirovic-Rukavina, Bela Crkva 1983.

– 11.♔f2 f5 12.♗d2 ♘f7 13.♘b5 ♔d8 14.♗c4 ♘d6 15.♘xd6 cxd6 16.♘f3 ♘c6 17.c3±, Ivanovic-Popchev, Stara Pazova 1988.

9.h3

Another move order is possible too: 9.♘f3 0-0 10.h3 ♘h6 11.g4 f6 12.♗c4+ ♘f7 13.exf6 exf6 14.♔f2 ♘d7 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♖he1 with a slight edge for White in S.H. Nielsen-Hoi, Copenhagen 1995.

9...♘h6 10.g4

The advance of the g-pawn is an integral part of White's plan, so there is no real point to postpone g4.

Yet, 10.♔f2 f6 11.exf6 exf6 12.♗c4 ♔d8 13.g4 ♖e8 14.♘f3 ♘d7 15.♖d1 b5 16.♗b3 ♔c7 17.♗e3 was also slightly better for White in Filipovic-Shvartz, Bratislava 1993.

10...f6 11.exf6 exf6 12.♗c4 f5

It makes perfect sense to open up the long diagonal for the bishop.

Black obtained counterplay in Konjevic-Govedarica, Yugoslavia tt-2 1994, after 12...♘d7 13.♖h2 ♔d8 14.♗e3 b5 15.♗f1 ♖e8 16.♔d2 ♗b7.

13.g5 ♘f7 14.♘f3 0-0

The move 14...♘d6?! feels dubious after 15.♗b3 ♔d7 (15...♘a6 16.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 17.bxc3 c5 18.♖d1 ♔e7 19.♘e5±) 16.h4 ♔c7 17.h5 gxh5 18.♖xh5 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 fxe4 20.♘e5 ♗f5 with quite unclear play in the game Bronstein-Tseshkovsky, Moscow 1981.

15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♔f2 ♘a6?!

The drawbacks of this move are far more obvious than its advantages, so it made more

sense to trade the light-squared bishops rather than allow White to trade his bishop for the black knight.

Still, White has a slight edge after 16...♗e6 17.♗xe6 ♖xe6 18.♗d4 ♘d7 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.♖ad1.

17.♖he1

Or already here 17.♗xa6!?.

17...♗e6?

Not surprisingly the position after 18.♗xa6! is rather unpleasant for Black, so 17...♘c7 was called for.

18.♗xa6! ♗xc3 19.bxc3 bxa6

20.♗c5!

A huge difference in the strength of the respective knights makes Black's defensive task very challenging.

20...♗d5 21.a3!? ♗e4

White wins after 21...♖ad8 22.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23.♖b1 ♘d8 24.♖b8 ♗xf3 25.♔xf3 ♔f7 26.♖a8 ♘e6 27.♖xa7+.

22.♖ab1! ♖ad8

After 22...♗xc2 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖b7 ♘d8 25.♖b8 Black is completely tied up.

23.♖b7 ♖d5 24.♗d4!± ♖ed8

Or 24...♘d6 25.♖g7+ ♔f8 26.♖xh7±.

25.♗f6 ♖8d7? 26.♖b8+ ♘d8 27.c4

White is winning.

27...♖5d6 28.♘e5 ♖d2+ 29.♖e2 ♖b7 30.♖xd2

Black resigned.

□ **Andrey Lukin**
■ **Mark Tseitlin**
Leningrad ch 1972

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♔e1 ♘c6!?

This move is far less popular than the more solid 8...c6, but things are not entirely clear after 8...♘c6 either.

9.h3!?

Compared to the game Gavrilakis-Arduman below White gains the important option to move the king to f2 after ...♘xc2+, which makes quite a difference.

Thus, 9.♘d5 ♘d4 10.♘xc7+ ♔d8 11.♘xa8 ♘xc2+ 12.♔e2 ♘xa1 13.h3 ♘h6 14.g4 ♘c2 15.♔d1 ♘b4 16.♖h2 ♗e6 17.♗e3 b6 18.♖d2+ ♔c8 was better for Black in Gavrilakis-Arduman, Athens 1989.

9...♘h6?

The following forced sequence of moves appears to be quite crucial for the evaluation of the entire line with 8...♘c6:

9...♘b4! 10.hxg4 (10.♗b5+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12.hxg4 ♘xc2+ 13.♔d1 ♘xa1 14.♗e3 is unclear) 10...♘xc2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♗e2, and here Black has quite a few options at his disposal, however, in all of them White seems to get grip on Black's knight on a1.

The big question is whether it will promise him any opening advantage...

– After 12...♗e6 13.♗e3 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♔c1 ♗xa2 16.♘xa2 ♗d4 17.♗xd4 ♘b3+ 18.♔b1 ♘xd4 19.♗d1 White is indeed slightly better.

– Stronger is 12...0-0 13.♗e3 f6 14.♔c1 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♔b1 ♗xg4 17.♘f3 ♗f4 18.♗f2 ♖ad8, and it seems that Black gets a very comfortable position by rather straightforward play.

– 12...h5!? is another interesting possibility.

10.♘d5

Not the only way to gain an advantage here: 10.g4 ♗e6 11.♗b5 0-0-0 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♗e3 f6 14.exf6 exf6 15.♘ge2±, Vasiukov-Kuzmin, Moscow 1981.

10...♘d4?!

Accepting the challenge. It should be mentioned that after 10...♔d8 11.♗e3 ♘f5 12.♗f2 h5 13.♖d1 ♗d7 14.♘f3 White enjoys a comfortable edge.

11.♘xc7+ ♔d8 12.♘xa8 ♘xc2+ 13.♔f2 ♘xa1 14.♗e3

In many lines Black king gets slaughtered under a direct attack of White's pieces.

14...f6

The following line may serve as a good illustration of the previous thesis: 14...b6 15.♘xb6! axb6 16.♗xb6+ ♔e8 17.♘f3 ♘c2 18.♗b5+ ♗d7 19.♖d1! and wins.

15.♘f3 fxe5

White to play and win:

16.♗b5! ♘f5 17.♗xa7 17.♖d1+ ♘d6 18.fxe5 ♗d7 19.exd6 ♗xb5 20.♗g5+–. **17...♗d7 18.♗xd7 ♔xd7 19.♘b6+ ♔c6 20.♖xa1 exf4 21.♖c1+ ♔b5 22.♘d5 ♔a6 23.♗c5 e5 24.♘c7+ ♔a5 25.♘d2 ♘e3 26.♘b3+** 26.♖c4 ends in mate. **26...♔a4 27.♗xe3 fxe3+ 28.♔e2 b5** Black resigned.

□ **Jonny Hector**
■ **Ilia Smirin**
Oslo 1994

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 dxe5 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♘d5

The idea behind this move is to force Black to give up on castling, however it's hardly sufficient to pose Black any problems.

So, 8.♔e1 from the two previous games is my personal preference.

8...♔d8 9.♔e1 ♗e6

After 9...c6 10.♘c3 (nothing is promised by 10.♘e3 f6 11.♘f3 fxe5 12.♘xg4 ♗xg4 13.♘xe5 ♗e6 14.♗e3 ♘d7 15.♖d1 ♗xe5 16.fxe5 ♖f8 17.g3 ♔c7 18.♗g2 ♘b6, Bosboom-Clausen, Copenhagen 1985) 10...f6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♘f3 ♘d7 13.♗c4 ♖f8

(intending 14...♘f7) 14.exf6 exf6 15.♔f2 White keeps a small plus, Chernov-Marin, Rumania tt 1999.

10.♘c3

Weaker is 10.♘b4?! f6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♘f3 c5 13.♘d3 b6 14.g4 ♗d5 15.♗g2 ♘c6 16.♗d2 ♔c7∓, Cueto-Belli, Lima 2002.

10...♘c6 11.♘f3 f6

After 11...♘b4 12.♘d4 ♗f5 13.h3 ♘h6 14.g4 c5 15.♘xf5 gxf5 White should continue with 16.♖h2!± rather than with 16.g5? ♘xc2+ 17.♔d1 ♘xa1 18.gxh6 ♗xh6∓, Iskov-Lekander, Eksjö II 1982.

12.h3 ♘h6 13.♗b5!

Indirectly protecting the pawn on e5.

13.♗e3? ♘f5 (correct is 13...fxe5 14.fxe5 ♘f7∓) 14.exf6 exf6 15.♖d1+ ♔e8 16.♗f2 ♔f7 17.♘h5 ♖ac8 18.g4 ♘fe7 19.♗e2 a6 20.♘c3±, Vozniak-Halamay, Rodatychi 2006.

13...♘b4

Not 13...fxe5?! 14.fxe5 ♘f7 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♗f4 ♗d5 17.♘xd5 cxd5 18.e6 ♗xb2 19.♖d1±, Melnikov-Zakharchenko, St.Petersburg 2006.

14.♗a4!

This move is more precise than the immediate 14.♘d4 ♗d7 (14...♗f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 – 15...exf6 – 16.♘xf5 ♘xf5 17.♗a4 unclear) 15.♗xd7 ♔xd7 16.e6+ ♔c8 17.♘ce2 ♖d8, and the white pawn on e6 is more of a weakness than a strength.

14...♗f5 15.exf6 exf6 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.a3 ♗xa4 18.♘xa4

Equality is the outcome after 18.♘e6+ ♔e7 19.axb4 ♔xe6 20.♘xa4 ♗f8 21.♗d2 ♗d6 22.♔f2 ♖ad8.

18...♖e8+ 19.♔f2 ♘a6 20.♗e3 f5 21.♖ad1 ♔c8 22.♘b5±

White has emerged out of the opening with a certain advantage due to the rather passive position of Black's knights on a6 and h6.

22...b6 23.c4 ♖e7 24.c5?!

The start of a wrong plan, which eventually leads to an advantage for Black.

After the correct 24.♖he1 ♔b7 (24...♘g8 25.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 26.♘xd4 ♔b7 27.♖xe7 ♘xe7 28.♘e6±) 25.♘ac3 ♖ae8 26.g3 White would keep all the benefits of his position.

24...♔b7 25.♖d3?!

And here 25.b4! was stronger.

25...♘f7 26.♖c1 c6

All of a sudden White's queenside pawns are very vulnerable. To be more specific, in many lines White is having problems to protect the pawn on c5.

27.♘d6+ 27.♖cd1 cxb5 28.♖d7+ ♖xd7 29.♖xd7+ ♔c6 30.♖xf7 ♗h8 31.♘c3 ♘xc5∓. **27...♘xd6 28.♖xd6 b5 29.♘c3 ♖ae8 30.♖d3?** The decisive mistake, which is being immediately exploited by Black. 30.b4! had to be played. **30...♖xe3! 31.♖d7+ ♔b8 32.♖xg7 ♘xc5 33.♔g1 ♘d3 34.♖d1** 34.♖c2. **34...♖e1+ 35.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 36.♔h2 ♘xb2−+ 37.♖xh7 ♖e3 38.♘a2 a5!** White resigned.

The following game is by no means an example of how White should be handling this position in case Black refrains from entering an endgame. I just wanted to demonstrate that avoiding well-known theoretical lines may also backfire if such a deviation is not based on solid positional and tactical grounds.

□ **Sahbaz Nurkic**
■ **Federico Manca**
Marostica 1993

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.f4 ♗g7 5.e5 ♘fd7

6.♘e4?!

This move may not be especially recommended for White, although he can retain equal chances after the text. I guess there is no choice but to play 6.♘f3, when 6...0-0 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4 9.hxg6 (9.♕xd4) 9...dxc3 10.gxf7+ ♖xf7 11.♗c4 and so on, is an extremely sharp line normally arising after the move order 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7.

No better is 6.♗c4?! c5 7.exd6 0-0 8.dxc5 ♘xc5 9.dxe7 ♕xe7+ 10.♕e2 ♖e8 11.♕xe7 ♖xe7+ 12.♔f2 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘e4+ 14.♔f3 ♘xc3∓, Voitsekhovsky-Gipslis, Pardubice 1994.

6...c5 7.c3 0-0

Black equalizes after 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♕a5+ 9.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 10.♗xd2 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♘b6 12.♗b5 ♗f5 13.♘f2 0-0 14.♖c1 ♖ac8 15.0-0 ♗e6, Carretero-Fluvia, Sevilla 2004.

8.♘f3

Borgo-Vancini, Chianciano ch-ITA 1989, was equal after 8.♗e3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘b6 10.♘f3 ♘d5 11.♗d2 ♘c6 12.♘c3 dxe5 13.dxe5 ♗f5 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♗e2 ♘d4 16.♘xd4 ♕xd4.

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6

Black also has sufficient counterchances after 9...♘b6 10.♗e2 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♘c3 ♖c8 13.d5 ♘b4 14.a3 ♘c2 15.g4 ♗xg4 16.♕xc2 ♘xd5 17.♕e4 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♖xc3 19.♕d4 ♖c8, Bronstein-Ermenkov, Wijk aan Zee II 1992.

10.♘c3

White held an edge after 10.♗e3 ♘b6 11.♘c3 ♗g4? 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♖c8 14.♖d1! d5 15.h4, Moen-Eikseth, Norway tt 1994. Correct was 11...♘b4 with unclear play.

10...♘b6

11.d5?!

This move is the source of White's future problems. However, also after the correct 11.♗e3 ♘b4 12.♗e2 ♗f5 13.♖c1 ♘4d5 14.♗d2 Black has a very comfortable position. Both sides have equal chances after 11.♗e2 dxe5 12.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 13.♗xd1 ♗e6.

11...♘b8 12.h3

White would have to capture on d6 sooner or later as the pawn on e5 cannot be protected. 12.♗e2 ♗g4!? (12...dxe5 13.fxe5 ♗g4 14.♗f4 ♘8d7 15.♘g5 ♗xe2 16.♕xe2 ♕c7∓) 13.0-0 (13.e6 fxe6 14.♘g5 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 ♕c8 16.♕xe6+ ♕xe6+ 17.♘xe6 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♖c8∓) 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 dxe5 15.♕e2 ♘8d7∓.

12...♘8d7 13.exd6 exd6 14.♔f2?!

The lesser evil was 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.0-0 ♘c5 16.♖e1 ♗f5∓

14...♘c5 15.♔g1 ♖e8

Black's pieces are excellently placed, while the white ones lack coordination.

16.♔h2 ♗d7 17.♗d2 ♘ca4

Going after pawn d5.

18.♕b3 ♘xc3 19.bxc3

Black wins after 19.♗xc3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♖c8 21.♕b4 (21.c4 ♕f6−+) 21...♕f6.

19...♗f5 20.♗b5?

After this move White may not play c4 in the future as the bishop gets trapped on b5. Stronger was 20.♖e1 ♖xe1 21.♗xe1 ♖c8 22.c4 ♕e7 23.♗f2∓.

20...♖e7 21.♖ae1 ♗e4 22.♖xe4

Equivalent to resignation. It was still possible to put up some resistance with 22.♘g5 ♗xd5 23.c4 ♗c6 24.♗c3 d5 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 26.♗xc6 bxc6 27.♖xe7 ♕xe7 28.♕c3+ ♔g8 29.♖e1 d4∓.

22...♖xe4 23.♗d3 ♖e8 24.c4 ♘d7

White resigned.

CHAPTER 13

Glenn Flear

The Bird's Defence According to Bird

Bird with 5.♗c4 h5 and 5.0-0 h5

Bird's Defence is in itself slightly offbeat, but when Black follows up with an early ...h5 the game takes on a distinctly eccentric look.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4

and now: **5...h5!** deserves a diagram.

What can Black be doing? After the initial shock, your opponent will perhaps understand that with the centre fairly closed and him having spent a tempo on moving an already developed piece, Black can start to pump up his potential on the kingside.

Where did this idea come from?

It seems that pushing the h-pawn early is an idea as old as the ark. Here's one of the earliest examples against Noa...

□ **Josef Noa**
■ **Henry Bird**
Vienna 1882

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.c3 ♗c5 6.♗c4 h5 7.d3 c6 8.♕c2?! b5 9.♗b3 ♗b6 10.♕e2 d6 11.h3 ♕f6 12.♗d2 ♘e7 13.♘a3 ♘g6 14.0-0-0 a5

with a queenside initiative for Black.

A little history never did anyone any harm. In my database, the first Bird's Defence game I have is from 1856 (Staunton). Henry Bird first played the Bird's in 1866, but it was only twelve years later that he intro-

duced the idea of playing 5...h5 in the following encounter...

□ **Simon Winawer**
■ **Henry Bird**
Paris 1878

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0 h5 The first game in my database with 5...h5, this time against 5.0-0. **6.d3 ♗c5 7.h3 c6 8.♗c4 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♗a4**

11...g5?! Slightly wild. The more restrained 11...♘e7 12.♖e1 ♕b6 13.♗b3 transposes to Ringoir-Flear, played 130 years later! **12.♖e1 ♗e6 13.f4 b5?** Very wild! **14.♗xb5 ♕a5 15.♗c6 ♖c8 16.♖xe6!** 16.f5 was also possible. **16...fxe6 17.♗d7 ♖d8 18.♗xe6 ♖e8 19.f5** and White went on to win.

Here's another example of our hero in action.

□ **Max Judd**
■ **Henry Bird**
New York 1889

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.d3 h5 6.c3 c6

Three years later Henry Bird refined his move order: 6...♗c5 7.0-0 c6 8.♗a4 d6 9.♕e1 ♕f6 10.♔h1 ♘h6 11.f3 h4 12.♗c2 ♗d7 13.cxd4 ♗xd4 14.♘c3 0-0-0, Blackburne-Bird, Belfast 1892, with reasonable play for Black.
Bird beat his distinguished opponent in this game, and in later years Blackburne himself played the Bird's, that is, with ...h5 of course!
7.♗c4 ♗c5 8.♕f3

8...♕e7
Evgeny Najer can be attributed with starting the modern day mini-revival. He varied with the offer of the exchange of queens in Zagrebelny-Najer, Moscow 1995, and soon fully equalized: 8...♕f6 9.♘d2 d6 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.♕xf6 ♘xf6 12.♖e1 0-0 13.h3 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.cxd4 ♗xd4 16.♘f3 ♗b6 17.e5 dxc5 18.♖xe5 ♖ad8.
9.0-0 d6 10.h3 ♗e6 11.♘d2 g5
Optimistic! However Bird seemed to like playing on the flanks!
12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♘b3 g4 14.♕g3 gxh3 15.♕xh3 dxc3 16.bxc3 ♗b6
Here White should perhaps have played 17.a4, with a slight advantage.

Finally to round off developments in the 19th century, we note that Bird tried out his idea in a famous tournament.

□ **Georg Marco**
■ **Henry Bird**
Hastings 1895

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3 ♗c5 7.0-0

7...d6
Losing a tempo as things turned out!
8.f4 c6 9.f5 d5 10.exd5 cxd5 11.♗b3 f6 12.♕f3 ♘e7 13.h3 a5 14.a4 ♔f8 15.g4 hxg4 16.hxg4 ♖a6 17.♗f4 g6
and Black had equalized.

In these four game references Henry Edward Bird's opponents tried four different fifth moves and yet an early ...h5 seemed to be a valid try in each case.

Indeed, although I was originally going to write about the diagram position above (after 5.♗c4 h5), there doesn't seem to be that much difference with 5.0-0 h5 and it almost invariably transposes.

The timing of ...h5 in the Bird's is a matter of taste, but the SOS approach is definitely to play it on move five and then win plenty of time on your clock as your opponent wonders if you just touched the h-pawn by accident or not!

Here is a game by yours truly to show that ...h5 can be quite effective even if in this particular game I didn't play this flank thrust quite that early.

□ **Tanguy Ringoir**
■ **Glenn Flear**
Chamalières 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0 ♗c5
Bird, Blackburne, Najer and Morozevich have played 5...h5 here. Can you be persuaded to add your name to the list?
6.d3 c6 7.♗c4 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.♗b5+ ♔f8 10.♖e1 ♘e7 11.♗a4

11...♕b6!?
More to the point could be 11...h5 immediately:
– 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗d2 ♗g4 14.♕c1 ♖c8 15.a3 ♕b6 16.♗b3 a6 17.♗f4 g5 18.♗d2 ♗e6, Kosteniuk-Najer, Moscow 1996, and White was very restricted.
– 12.h3 a5 13.♗f4 ♖a6 14.♘d2 ♖g6 15.♔h1 ♗d6 16.♗xd6 ♕xd6 17.♘f1 ♕f6, Nikhilesh-Jirka, Goa 2002, and Black was fine.
12.♗b3 h5
Better late than never!
13.h3 a5 14.a4 ♕g6 15.♕f3 ♗g4!

I couldn't resist!

16.hxg4 hxg4 17.♕g3

The best chance is 17.♕f4! ♗d6 18.♕xd4, but even here after 18...♕h5 19.♔f1 ♖e8 Black has plenty of compensation for his piece as White's king will be in for a rough ride.

Incidentally, 18.♕xd4 is better than 18.♕g5 ♕h7 19.f4 gxf3 20.♔f2 ♕h2 as Black then seems to be winning e.g. 21.♘d2 fxg2 22.♖g1 ♗f4 23.♘f3 ♗xg5 24.♘xh2 ♗xc1 etc.

17...♘f5 18.♕e5

18.♕c7 is downed by 18...♕h5! 19.♕xc5+ ♔g8 20.♔f1 ♕h1+ 21.♔e2 ♖e8+ 22.♗e3 ♕xg2 23.♔d1 ♘xe3+ 24.fxe3 ♕f3+ 25.♔c1 ♖h1 and so on.

18...♕h5 19.♔f1

19...♘e3+

Even better was 19...♗d6 20.♕xd5 ♕h1+ 21.♔e2 ♘g3+! 22.♔d1 ♕xe1+! forcing mate.

20.♖xe3 dxe3 21.♕xh5 ♖xh5

So White survives to play a few more moves even if they are not particularly joyful ones!

22.♗xe3 d4 23.♗f4 ♖h1+ 24.♔e2 ♖e8+ 25.♔d2 ♖he1 26.♗e3 dxe3+ 27.fxe3 ♖8xe3 28.♔c3 ♖3e2 29.♔c4 ♗b4

White resigned.

So let's look at some of White's attempts against 5...h5.

□ **Evgeny Romanov**
■ **Pavel Potapov**
Moscow 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.0-0 ♗c5 7.b4!?

Feeding a pawn to the Bird's?!

7...♗b6

Declining, in order to avoid White obtaining a gambit initiative.

However the principled move must be 7...♗xb4! e.g. 8.c3 ♗c5 9.♗b2 ♕f6 10.e5 ♕b6 (10...♕f4 11.g3 favours White) 11.♕b3 (if 11.♗b3, Black should get on with his development: 11...♘e7 12.♕f3 0-0

13.♕xh5 d3 14.♕f3 d6 with a reasonable game) 11...♕xb3 12.axb3 and even after the exchange of queens White probably has enough compensation e.g. 12...dxc3 13.♘xc3 ♘e7 with a solid but slightly passive position. (13...♗d4?! 14.♘d5! ♗xb2 15.♘xc7+ ♔d8 16.♘xa8 ♗xa1 17.♖xa1 and the knight will soon hop to b6. In any case Black's ...h5 is virtually useless in this particular line.) 14.♘b5 ♗b6 15.d4 a6! and Black is fine.

8.a4 a5 9.bxa5

Here 9.b5 has its points: White gains space and can develop his bishop with ♗a3.

9...♖xa5 10.d3 d6 11.♘d2 ♗d7 12.♘f3 h4!?

Here chasing a pawn isn't quite satisfactory: 12...♖xa4 13.♖xa4 ♗xa4 14.♗b2 c5 15.♕b1 ♗c6 16.c3 and again White obtains long-term pressure for his investment.

13.h3 c6 14.♗d2

14.♗b2 ♕f6 15.♖b1! looks quite promising for White e.g. 15...♘c7 16.♗a1 ♘c8 17.♖xb6! with excellent play for White.

14...♖ah5!?

An original manoeuvre.

15.♖b1 ♘f6 16.♗g5 ♕c7

Does White really want to open the g-file?

17.♕c1

Black's position doesn't inspire confidence at this point.

17...♘h7!

Best practical try. If White captures the h-pawn then Black's rooks may really come into their own.

18.♗xh4 ♗c5 19.♗g3 ♕c8!

With some chances of landing a combination against White's king.

20.c3 dxc3

Going all in with 20...♗xh3 21.gxh3 ♕xh3 22.♘h2 dxc3, looks a little optimistic after the calm 23.♕f4!.

21.♕xc3 ♘g5 22.♘xg5 ♖xg5 23.d4

Blocking the a7-g1 diagonal.

23...♗a7 24.f4!?

I prefer 24.♕f3 as the threat against the f7 pawn obliges Black to make some sort of concession.

24...♗xd4+ 25.♕xd4 ♖xg3 26.f5

Best could be 26.♖b3! ♖hxh3 (if 26...♖g6, then 27.f5 ♖f6 28.♕a7) 27.♖xg3 ♖xg3 28.♕xd6 which favours the first player. Black's king is vulnerable and Black's lone rook isn't dangerous.

26...♕c7 27.♔f2

Instead after 27.♖fd1 Black can save himself with 27...♖h4 28.♕xd6 ♕xd6 29.♖xd6 ♖xe4 30.♖xb7 ♖xc4 31.♖dxd7 ♖c2.

27...♖g5 28.♕e3 f6 29.♖fd1

White has consolidated and has the more active outfit.

29...♔d8!? 30.♔g1 ♖h4 31.a5 d5!

Not the sort of move you want to face when short of time!

32.♗xd5?

A crazy move. The natural 32.♗d3 was forced e.g. 32...♖g3! 33.♕a7! (33.♕f2 ♖hxh3 34.exd5 ♖xg2+! is dangerous for White) 33...♖hxh3 34.♗f1 ♖g5 35.♖xb7 ♕h2+ 36.♔f2 ♕f4+ 37.♔g1 with a draw.

32...cxd5 33.♖bc1 ♕e5 34.♕b6+ ♔e8 35.♖e1 ♖xe4

White has nothing for his piece. White resigned.

□ **Amador Rodriguez**
■ **Walter Arencibia**
Cienfuegos 1996

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3

Delaying this move is possible: 6.c3 ♗c5 7.cxd4 ♗xd4 8.♘c3 c6 9.♘e2 ♗b6 10.♕b3 ♕e7 (White has avoided d2-d3 but this 'gain of time' doesn't lead anywhere) 11.0-0 ♘f6 12.♕g3? (more sensible here is 12.e5! ♕xe5 13.♗xf7+ ♔f8 14.♗g6 d5=; but note that 12.♘c3?! could be met by 12...♘g4! with chances for an attack) 12...h4 13.♕g5 (if 13.♕xg7 then 13...♖g8 14.♕h6 h3! with a strong attack) 13...h3 and Black was clearly on top already, Shmuter-Najer, St Petersburg 1993.

6...♗c5 7.♘d2 c6 8.♘f3 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b3

The alternative 10.♗b5+? ♔f8 leaves the white bishop in danger.

10...♕e7+

Black was also perfectly fine after 10...♘e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e1 a5 13.a4 ♖a6 14.♖e5 g6 15.h3 f6 16.♖e1 ♘f5 in Fogarasi-Potapov, Budapest 2006.

11.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 12.♔xe2 ♘e7 13.♗a4+

Nor does 13.♖e1 f6 14.♔f1 ♔f7 15.c3 dxc3 16.bxc3 ♗f5 give White anything.

13...♗d7

In middlegames moving the king is often the right idea keeping the tension. It's then that White's light-squared bishop often proves to be the inferior piece to its black counterpart: 13...♔f8!? 14.h3 (14.♘e5?! ♗d6!) 14...f6 15.♗d2 ♔f7 16.♖he1 wouldn't be that clear.

14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7

These endgames aren't really a problem for Black as his central pawns can't be easily attacked.

15.b4 ♗xb4 16.♖b1 a5 17.a3

Rodriguez later preferred 17.♗b2 ♘c6 18.♘xd4 ♖he8+ 19.♔d1 with equality.

17...♗c5 18.♖xb7+ ♔c6 19.♖b1 f6 20.♗b2 ♘f5 21.♖hc1

Intending c2-c3 competing for space.

21...♖he8+

Perhaps Black can keep some chances of an edge with 21...♖hb8 22.c3 dxc3

23.♖xc3 ♔d6 24.♖cc1 a4! fixing the pawn on a dark square. **22.♔f1 ♔d6 23.a4** Draw.

□ **Artyom Timofeev**
■ **Jiri Jirka**
Goa 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 h5 6.d3 ♗c5 7.♘d2 c6 8.♕e2

8...d6?!
Again, just as we saw in Marco-Bird, this move can lose time as Black's best counter is often ...d5. Jirka decided to play ...d7-d5 in one go a year later: 8...♘e7 9.e5 (9.♘f3 d5 gives Black a tempo more than in the main game) 9...d5 10.exd6 ♗xd6 11.♘e4 ♗g4 12.f3 ♗f5 13.♗d2 0-0 14.g4 ♗g6, Stehno-Jirka, Luhacovice 2003, with unclear play.
9.♘f3 ♘e7 10.0-0 d5 11.♗b3
Keeping the tension seems a good idea.
11...a5 12.c3 ♗g4 13.a3 a4 14.♗a2 ♔f8!?
What else to do with the king?
15.h3 dxe4
15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♕d6 17.♗d2 would allow White a comfortable edge due to his bishop pair.
16.hxg4!? exf3 17.♕xf3 ♘d5 18.g5
I prefer White after 18.gxh5! as regaining the pawn is no trivial matter.
18...♕d7 19.♗d2 ♖d8 20.♖fe1
White has a pull due to the fact that Black's rook on h8 isn't participating, so exchanging queens (followed by ...g6 to link rooks) looks normal.
20...♕g4 21.♕xg4 hxg4 22.c4!? ♘e7 23.b4 axb3 24.♗xb3

24...g3?!
Despite the damage to White's structure... a pawn is a pawn. Instead, Black should be fine after 24...♘g6 25.♗b4 ♗e7, or even 24...g6 aiming to link rooks.
25.fxg3 ♗d6 26.♗f4
White's pawns are tripled but are there on the board, and as you'll see Black doesn't seem to be able to break up the kingside grip.
26...c5 27.♗d1 ♘f5 28.♖b1
Ensuring an advantage.
28...g6 29.♖xb7 ♔g7
29...♘xg3 is the lesser evil but White is still better following 30.♗xd6+ ♖xd6 31.♖b8+ ♔g7 32.♖xh8 ♔xh8 33.♗g4.
30.♗f3 ♗xf4
It's too late for 30...♘xg3 due to 31.♗xd6 ♖xd6 32.♖ee7 ♖f8 33.♗d5 etc.
31.gxf4 ♘e3 32.♖b5 ♖c8 33.a4 ♖h4 34.a5 ♘c2 35.♖eb1 ♘b4 36.♖1xb4 cxb4 37.a6 ♖xf4 38.a7 ♖xf3 39.♖b8 ♖xb8 40.axb8♕ ♖xd3 41.♕xb4
Black resigned.

□ **Alexander Morozevich**
■ **Evgeny Najer**
Moscow 1992

One of Najer's earlier efforts.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4

Spending a tempo to place the bishop on a more active square.

5...h5

Gaining space on the kingside! Why not, if White is playing so slowly! Morozevich was obviously convinced enough to play this move himself as Black against 2700 opposition – see the next game.

Black really has to avoid 5...♗c5? 6.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 7.♕h5+.

6.0-0 ♗c5 7.c3 c6 8.cxd4 ♗xd4 9.♘c3 d6?!

Not best in my opinion. Morozevich, playing Black a decade later, decided on 9...♘f6! against Leko.

10.d3?!

White later improved with 10.♘e2! ♗b6 11.♕b3 ♕e7 12.d4 (taking the centre) 12...♗g4 (12...h4 13.h3 ♕xe4 14.♗xf7+ ♔f8 15.♗c4 is messy but probably favours White) 13.♗e3 ♘f6 14.♘c3 0-0 15.♖ae1, and White consolidates his central advantage, Aitbayev-Potapov, Vung Tau 2008.

10...♘f6 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 12.fxe3 d5!?

Here 12...h4 could be thrown in, especially if White has nothing better than 13.h3.

13.exd5 cxd5 14.♗b5+ ♔f8

Black's slower development and misplaced king don't seem to lead to any serious problems. In these cases you need to persuade yourself that once one has played ...h5, the rook is already semi-developed on the h-file!

15.♕d2 ♕b6 16.♖f4 ♗e6 17.♗a4 ♘g4 18.♖e1 g5

Played in the spirit of Henry Bird!

19.♖d4 ♕d6 20.g3 h4!

Now the point behind 5...h5 becomes clear!

21.♗d1 ♘e5 22.♕f2

Or 22.g4!?, closing the wing, and then 22...♘c6 23.♖a4 and, although Black's attack is stymied, the resulting position is still hard to judge.

22...hxg3 23.♕xg3 ♖h3

Now the rook is fully developed.

24.♕g2 g4!?

25.♘e4?

Maybe 25.♗xg4!? ♗xg4 26.♖xg4 ♖xh2! 27.♔xh2! ♘xg4+ 28.♔g1 when White shouldn't be worse.

25...♕e7 26.♘g3 ♖c8 27.♗xg4?

Similar to the previous note but in the mean time things have deteriorated for White. The superior 27.♖f1 would keep White in the game.

27...♗xg4 28.♖xg4 ♖xh2 29.♖g8+

Alternatives just lose: 29.♕xh2 ♘f3+; or 29.♔xh2 ♘xg4+ 30.♔g1 ♖c1!.

29...♔xg8 30.♔xh2 ♕h4+

30...♕g5! might be even stronger.

31.♔g1 ♘g4 32.♘f1 ♖c6 33.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 34.♘xg3 ♖c2

Black has a clear advantage.

35.d4 ♖xb2 36.e4 dxe4 37.♖xe4 ♘f6 38.♖e7 ♔f8 39.♖c7 ♘d5 40.♖d7 ♘e3 41.♘e4 f5 42.♘c5 ♖xa2 43.♖xb7 a5 44.♖a7 ♔e8 45.♘e6 a4 46.♘f4 a3 47.d5 ♘c4 48.♘g2 ♖d2 49.d6 a2 50.d7+ ♔e7

White resigned.

□ **Peter Leko**
■ **Alexander Morozevich**
Moscow 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.0-0

Castling into it!?

5...h5

Flexing his muscles. If Black can indeed play like this it's because his d-pawn cramps White's development, so Leko decides to eliminate that pawn.

6.c3 ♗c5

7.cxd4

It seems natural for White to play for an open centre with Black having played the outrageous wing thrust ...h5!

After 7.d3 c6 8.♗c4 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b5+ ♔f8 11.♕e1, as in Saltaev-Najer, Moscow 1995, I like 11...♘e7! when 12.cxd4 ♗xd4 13.♕b4 ♗f6(=) 14.♗f4 a6 15.♗a4 h4 16.h3 offers Black several playable possibilities such as 16...g5, 16...g6, and 16...b5 17.♗c2 ♗e6.

7...♗xd4 8.♘c3 c6 9.♗c4 ♘f6! 10.♘e2 ♗b6 11.e5 d5!

12.♗b3

The alternative 12.exf6 dxc4 13.fxg7 ♖g8 14.♘f4 ♗g4 15.♕e1+ ♕e7 16.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 17.h3 ♗f5 18.♘xh5 ♗d4 should give enough pressure even with a two pawn deficit.

12...♘g8

I think that Black could have reacted more actively here: 12...♘e4! 13.d4 (after 13.d3 Black competes for space with 13...♘c5 14.♗c2 d4) 13...h4! and it's more difficult than in the game for White to maintain control.

13.d4 ♗g4 14.f3 ♗e6 15.♗c2

ECO judges White to be slightly better. Certainly he has more space and White's right-side majority could prove to be a handful, but the game continuation wasn't that convincing.

15...♘e7 16.♗g5 ♕d7 17.♗xe7

Not wishing the knight to install itself on f5.

17...♕xe7 18.♕d2 0-0-0 19.♔h1 ♔b8 20.f4 ♗g4 21.♘g1 f6 22.♖ae1

Khalifman prefers White here, but again I'm not buying it. Was he influenced by the result or the fundamentals of the position?

22...fxe5 23.dxe5

Otherwise 23.fxe5?! ♖df8 would instead suit Black. The d-pawn is then likely to remain a long-term weakness.

23...♕c5 24.a3 ♕d4 25.♕c1 ♖de8

Or here 25...c5!? 26.f5 c4 would be unclear.

26.♗g6 ♖e6 27.♗f7 ♖e7 28.e6 ♕f6 29.f5 ♗c7

Why not 29...♗d4! 30.b4 ♗c3, which again looks highly unclear. Black's minor pieces being more influential than White's.

30.♕c3 ♖h6 31.♗g6 ♕xc3 32.bxc3

32...h4?!

Better is 32...♗a5! 33.♖e3 (or 33.♖c1 ♖xg6! 34.fxg6 ♗xe6 with enough for the exchange) 33...♗b6 34.♖d3 (34.♖e5 ♗c7 35.♖ee1 ♗a5=) 34...♗c5 35.h3 ♗xf5 36.♗xf5 g6.

33.c4! h3?!

Only around here does White finally obtain the advantage.

With 33...dxc4! 34.♖e4 ♗h5 35.♖xh4 (nor does 35.♗xh5 ♖xh5 36.♖xc4 ♗d6 37.a4 ♔c7 look that clear) 35...♗xg6 36.♖xh6 gxh6 37.fxg6 ♗e5 38.♖f7 ♖xe6 39.g7 ♗xg7 40.♖xg7 ♖e3, Black has a likely draw.

34.g3 ♗d6 35.cxd5 cxd5 36.♘f3 ♗xf3+

Now 36...♖xg6 37.fxg6 ♖xe6 38.♖xe6 ♗xe6 39.♘d4 would be strongly favourable for White; and for that matter 36...♗xa3 37.♘e5 ♗h5 38.♗xh5 ♖xh5 39.♖d1 offers White a clear advantage.

37.♖xf3 ♖h8 38.g4 ♖c7 39.g5! ♖c2 40.♖g3 ♗xg3 41.hxg3

The central pawns are impossible to stop.

41...♖c3 42.f6 gxf6 43.gxf6 ♖xg3 44.e7 ♖xg6 45.f7 ♖gg8 46.e8♕+ ♖xe8 47.♖xe8+ 1-0

Conclusion: I don't see anything dramatic for White after either 5.0-0 h5 or 5.♗c4 h5. Indeed against the latter of these (5.♗c4) there is a possibility that 5...h5 is Black's best move. Two other points come to mind: my computer is clueless about judging the resulting positions and 19th century thinking can at times be relevant today.

CHAPTER 14

Arthur Kogan

The Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit

The 'crazy' 5...e5!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!?

The diagrammed position features the Mouse Sleep Slav gambit! I played this a few months ago in an online ICC blitz game. From time to time I play 2 or 3 games before going to sleep. To be honest I was planning to try the fairly popular (and solid) line starting with 5...e6, but being a bit sleepy I had a mouse slip... or as I usually call it: a mouse sleep! ☺

Surprisingly, the game went quite well for me, and I managed to obtain a nice attack. So I was curious to see if this gambit had been played before in a normal game. Interestingly, I found that Morozevich had already tried it against Bacrot in a rapid game in Cannes 2001. I also discovered that the original Canadian (ex-Russian) master Khassanov plays this gambit quite regularly. As it is played mainly by Russians, maybe this gambit has a name in Russia. Do mail us if you know!

Anyway, since I saw that Moro lost his game in a convincing way, I was not sure whether 5...e5 is playable. That is until recently, when I saw an attractive game between two strong Russian women players (no 'chess macho' views here! As an experienced women trainer I know that women often play much more aggressively and more creatively than men).

□ **Alina Kashlinskaya**
■ **Valentina Solovjova**
St Petersburg 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!?

And here we go! A real SOS style idea that will surely surprise your opponent! In fact Black follows my Olalachess principle of Anti-Gambit play: rather than defending your extra pawn and suffer for it, it is better to return it to quickly finish development. Make your pieces smile and be first to get the initiative!

6.♘xe5

Other moves will not concern Black, for example:

– 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♘g4 8.♔e1 ♘a6! and knight will come to b4 with very annoying pressure: 9.♗f4 (9.h3? ♘b4!–+) 9...♘b4 10.♖c1 f6! and Black is at least OK!

– 6.e3 exd4 7.♘xd4 (7.exd4 ♗e6) 7...♗d6 8.♗xc4 ♕c7! with an initiative for Black, for example: 9.h3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖d8.

6...♗b4

6...♗e6 is worse because of 7.e4!.

7.♘xc4

A natural move, but it gives Black a serious advantage in development for the pawn.

– 7.f3 is a typical idea to prepare e4, but is also risky, since Black is better developed. I would suggest 7...♘d5! (7...0-0 8.e4 ♘bd7 9.♘xc4 ♘xe4) 8.♕d2 Already the only move! (8.♗d2? ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕xd4∓; 8.♕c2? ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕xd4–+) 8...b5 (8...f5!?) 9.e4 ♘c7 10.♗e2 0-0 (10...f6 11.♘g4 ♘c6 12.d5 ♘c5 13.dxc6 ♗xg4 14.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15.axb5 ♘b3 16.♖a4! seems too dangerous for Black) with a very sharp position and mutual chances, for example: 11.0-0 f6 12.♘g4 ♗xg4 13.fxg4 ♘e6! 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♖d1 ♕b6 16.♕e3 ♘c6 17.♘d5 ♕b7 18.♕f2 a5.

– 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.e4 ♘bd7 9.♘xc4 h6! 10.♗xf6 (10.♗h4 g5 11.♗g3 ♘xe4∓) 10...♘xf6 11.f3 ♕e7! followed by castling queenside or ...♖d8 and White is in big danger on the dark squares: e.g. 12.♗e2 0-0-0† 13.0-0? ♖xd4–+.

For the main line 7.e3 see the next two games.

7...♗e6

Here 7...0-0 8.e3 c5! is also possible.

8.e3 c5!

9.♗e2

Other tries also offer Black compensation:

– 9.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 0-0 11.♘d6?! ♗xc5 12.♘xb7 ♗b4 and White's knight on b7 is in trouble.

– 9.♘e5 0-0 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.exd4 ♘c6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 ♗d6 or 13...♖b8 provides very decent compensation for a small (well-controlled) pawn.

9...♘c6 10.dxc5

In principle, being a pawn up, White is trying to exchange queens. However, Black

keeps a very active position! After 10.0-0?! cxd4 11.exd4 ♘xd4 it is White who has to think about equalizing.

10...♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♗xc5

Maybe even more accurate is 11...0-0-0+ 12.♔c2 (12.♔e1 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4 ♘e4∓) 12...♗f5+ (12...♗xc5 13.b3 ♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3) 13.♔b3 ♗xc5 14.f3 ♗e6 when White is in danger.

12.b3

12.♔e1 with the idea of f3 and ♔f2 is a better try, but Black still keeps good compensation after 12...0-0-0 (12...♘b4 13.♔f1) 13.f3 ♘b4 14.♔f2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♘e5 ♖dd8 (but not 16...♖d6 17.b4! ♗xb4 18.♘b5±).

12...♖d8+!?

Another surprise! It seems that this was Black's main strategy in this game!

My olala choice (the basis of Olalachess is Harmony – make all your pieces smile!) would be 12...0-0-0+!. So now ♖h8 will also smile soon: 13.♔c2 (13.♗d2? ♗b4∓) 13...♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘g4 (14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♘e5 ♖d6) 15.♘e4 (15.♗xg4 ♗xg4 16.♘e5 ♗h5) 15...♗e7 16.f3 (16.h3 f5) 16...f5!.

13.♔c2 ♗f5+?!

Stronger is 13...♘b4+ 14.♔b2 ♘g4 (14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3) 15.♗xg4 ♗xg4 16.f3 ♗e6 and Black has better development and more smiling pieces; that's worth at least a pawn!

14.♔b2 ♘b4

Not 14...0-0 15.f3!.

15.♗d2?!

It is not easy to defend well, when you have been surprised as of move 5! ☺

The best defence was 15.f3! ♗d3! (15...♘d3+? 16.♗xd3 ♗xd3 17.e4±) 16.♖d1! 0-0 (16...♔e7 17.♗xd3! ♘xd3+ 18.♔b1 with ♗a3, and White will finish her development) 17.♗xd3 (17.e4 ♗xe2 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 19.♘xe2 ♘d3+ 20.♔b1 – 20.♔a2 ♘b4+ repeats – 20...♘e1!) 17...♘xd3+ 18.♔b1 (18.♔c2 ♘b4+ 19.♔b1 ♖xd1 20.♘xd1 ♖d8) 18...♘f2 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♗a3! and eliminating Black's threats White's extra pawn provides a tangible advantage.

15...♗d3!

Being surprised on almost every move, White has spent a lot of time on the clock, and finally she lost control...

16.♖ad1??

16.♗e1 was the best chance: 16...0-0 when Black has nice compensation, but we are still a long way from a win.

16...♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♘d3+ 18.♔c2 ♘xf2–+ 19.♖hf1 ♘xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘e4 21.♘c3 ♘xd2 22.♘xd2 ♗xe3

White resigned.

□ **Jean Hébert**
■ **Marat Khassanov**
Montreal 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!? 6.♘xe5 ♗b4 7.e3

White intends to win the pawn without neglecting his development.

7...♗e6!

This is correct, after the natural 7...c5?!, 8.♗xc4 0-0 9.0-0 leaves White a pawn up with pressure on f7 to boot.

8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♘xc4 ♕d5!

So Black will win back a nice, tasty pawn on g2! If you see how natural White's moves were after 5...e5 than perhaps it does not surprise you to hear that this occurred in more than one game! I suspect that in this game White, who is a strong IM, simply missed this rare kind of fork! Something that often happens when you are confronted with a SOS. Luckily for White, the position is still unclear!

10.♕b3!

Another critical test for the gambit!

10.♘e5 ♕xg2 11.♕f3 ♕xf3 12.♘xf3 0-0 13.♗d2 a5 (I would suggest the improvement 13...♘a6!? to obtain a harmonious game with ...♖e8, ...♖d8 and the ...c5 break! After 14.♘e5 ♖fe8 with ...♗d6, ...c5 and ...♘b4 ideas the position favours Black) 14.♘e5 ♘bd7 15.♘d3 ♘b6! and Black was preferable in Gremeda-Chavez, Elista Olympiad 1998. According to the MegaBase this is the first game in history with 5...e5. However, I thought that calling it the Chavez Variation might be too controversial! ☺

10...♕xg2

There is no alternative but to plunge in. Not 10...a5? 11.0-0+−, nor 10...♗xc3+? 11.bxc3 ♕xg2 12.♘d6+!+−.

11.♕xb4!

Wow, a surprising counterattack! Maybe Hébert didn't miss 9...♕d5 after all?!

11...♕xh1+ 12.♔e2

12...c5?!

Not the best move in my opinion. Also unsatisfactory is 12...b6?! 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.a5!.

I would suggest 12...♘bd7! 13.♘d6+ (13.♕xb7? 0-0∓) 13...♔f8! (not 13...♔e7 14.♘xb7+).

The only problem for big fighters is that White can probably force a draw with 14.♕b3. After 14...♔e7! 15.♘f5+ with a repetition (but not 15.♘xf7? ♖hf8∓). In case Black wants to play he can try the risky 14...♘d5. However, after 15.♕xb7 (15.e4 ♕xh2! 16.♕xb7 ♕h5+) 15...♖d8 16.e4! ♕xh2! 17.exd5 ♕xd6 18.dxc6 ♕xd4 19.cxd7 ♖xd7 20.♕c8+ ♖d8 21.♕c7 ♖d7 22.♕c8+ the players still have to repeat moves.

Some alternatives for 14.♕b3:

– 14.♘xb7+? ♔g8∓ and on h7 Black's king is much safer than White's, and his h8-rook will smile too!

– 14.♕xb7 ♖b8 15.♕xa7 ♕xh2 attacks the knight. As Black is ready to go to h5 with check if necessary this favours Black who has at least a draw in his pocket.

– 14.e4!? ♕xh2 15.♕xb7 ♖b8 16.♕xc6 ♕h5+ 17.♔d3 (17.f3 ♕h2+ 18.♔d3 ♕h3 19.♔e2 ♕g2+ 20.♔e3 ♕g1+ repeats) 17...♕f3+ (17...♔g8!? with the idea of ...h6 and ...♔h7) 18.♗e3 h5! and the position will be very complicated. Both sides have their chances. White surely has some nice compensation for the exchange, but with your superior SOS preparation your opponent will probably be out of time by now, right? ☺

13.♕xc5

13.♘d6+! ♔d7 (13...♔f8 14.♕c4+–) 14.dxc5± is more dangerous for Black.

13...♕c6 14.♘d6+ ♔d7 15.♘xf7 ♕xc5 16.dxc5 ♖f8 17.♘e5+ ♔e6 18.♘d3 ♘c6 19.b4 ♖ad8 20.♗b2

And in this ending White has the slightly better chances. In the end a draw was agreed.

20...♖f7 21.♘b5 ♘e8 22.♘d4+ ♘xd4+ 23.♗xd4 g5 24.b5 ♘c7 25.♖c1 ♔f5 26.♖c4 ♖e7 27.♗c3 ♖e4 28.♖xe4 ♔xe4 29.b6 axb6 30.cxb6 ♘e6 31.f3+ ♔d5 32.♗d2 ♔c4 33.♘e5+ ♔d5 34.♘d3 ♔c4 35.♘e5+ ♔d5 Draw.

□ **Viktor Kortchnoi**
■ **Marat Khassanov**
Montreal 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 e5!? 6.♘xe5 ♗b4 7.e3 ♗e6!

8.♗e2!

This is not so natural, but I consider it the best option to fight for an advantage, although I am sure that not many of your opponents will find it.

Instead 8.♘xc4 c5! will transpose to our game Kashlinskaya-Solovjova from above. Worse is 8...♘e4?! 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2!?±) 9...♘xd2 10.♘xd2 0-0 11.♗e2 c5 12.dxc5 ♘d7 13.♘de4 f5 14.♕d4! a5 15.♗c4! and White was better in Voskanyan-Khassanov, Montreal 2004. Our gambit lover still managed to draw though.

Against other moves Black should use similar ideas as in the game, trying to open the centre with ...c5 to use his activity and development advantage. For example 8.♗d2!? 0-0 9.♘xc4 (9.♗xc4 ♗xc4 10.♘xc4 ♗xc3= 11.♗xc3 ♕d5!) 9...c5! 10.dxc5 ♕e7! 11.♗e2 ♖d8!.

8...c5!

Black has to play dynamically to compensate for the pawn!

8...♘e4?! was Moro's logical choice, but I consider it dubious: 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2 is also good for White) 9...♘d6 (or 9...♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d6 11.0-0±)

10.♘e4! ♘xe4 11.♗xb4 c5 12.♗c3 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗f3 ♗d5 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4 16.♕g4 ♕d5 17.dxc5 h5 18.♕xg7 0-0-0 19.♕d4 ♗xg2 20.♕xd5 ♗xd5 21.♖g1 and White was better in Bacrot-Morozevich, Cannes rapid 2001.

9.0-0

Black is OK following 9.♗f3!? cxd4! 10.exd4 (10.♕xd4 ♕e7! with nice compensation; 10.♗xb7? ♕c7! 11.♗xa8 dxc3 12.0-0 ♕xe5∓) 10...♘d5 11.0-0 0-0.

9...♘c6! 10.♗xc4 ♗xc4 11.♘xc4 cxd4 12.exd4 0-0

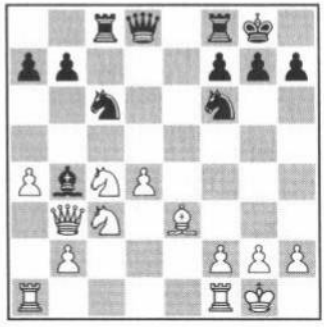
Here we have arrived at a critical position. White has managed to finish his development and to keep the pawn. However, Black remains active and remember that the extra pawn is a weakness on d4 especially if it gets blocked. Black has very good practical compensation, and if (at least for the moment!) this is the worst you can get from our Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit – then why not give it a try?

13.d5!?

13.♗e3 was tried by two strong GMs in St. Petersburg 2004:

Now 13...♘a5!? 14.♘xa5 ♕xa5 15.♕f3 ♖fd8 16.♕xb7 ♖ab8 17.♕f3 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♕xc3 19.♖fc1 would still keep decent winning chances for White. Interesting are 13...♖e8!? and 13...♘d5!?.

In practice Black has only tried 13...♖c8 14.♕b3



– 14...♗xc3 is not enough if White plays accurately: 15.bxc3 ♕d5 16.♖fc1 ♘g4 17.♕b5 ♘e7 18.♘d2 ♕e6 (18...♕d6 could be an improvement: 19.♘f3 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♘d5 21.♕xb7 ♖b8 – 21...♕e6 – 22.♕xa7 ♕g6! with ...♖b2 coming! Black seems to have decent chances) 19.♘f1 f5 20.♕xb7 ♘d5 21.♗d2 ♖b8 22.♖e1 ♕d6 23.♕xa7 ♖fc8 24.c4 ♖xc4 25.♖e6! ♕d8 26.♗g5!+–, Riazantsev-Solovjov, St Petersburg 2004.

– 14...♘g4!? 15.♖ad1 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3. Now the game went 16...♕d5 17.b3 ♖cd8 18.f3 ♘f6 19.♗f2 ♕g5 20.♕d2 ♕h5 21.♖fe1 ♘d5 22.♘e5 ♘cb4 (it is hard to improve White's position, since his extra pawn moves nowhere) 23.♖e4 ♕f5 24.♘c4 ♘c6 25.♗g3 h6 26.♗f2 ♕g6 27.♖g4 ♕f5 28.♖e4 ♕g6 29.♖de1 ♕g5 And probably tired of trying, White agreed to a draw after 30.♖d1 ♕g6 draw, Alekseev-Yevseev, St Petersburg 2004. Instead Black has 16...♕c7 as another good option

– 17.f4? ♘a5! (17...♘e7 18.b3) 18.h3 (18.♕xa5 ♕xa5 19.♘xa5 ♘xe3∓) 18...♘xe3 19.♘xe3 ♕xc3 20.bxc3 ♖xc3∓.

– 17.♘e5 ♘cxe5 18.♕xc7 ♖xc7 19.dxe5 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♖e8 with equal chances.

– 17.g3 ♘e7 18.b3 ♕c6!? and Black has good counterchances on the light squares. In fact 18...♖fd8 and 18...♘f6!? are decent too.

13...♘a5!

Correct, as 13...♘e7 is bad in view of 14.d6 ♘f5 15.♗f4±.

14.♘e3

The only way for White to try to keep his extra pawn.

After 14.♘xa5 ♕xa5 followed by ...♖d8, Black will easily win back the pawn with possibilities to fight for more than a draw.

14...♖c8 15.♗d2

15...♕d7

I would suggest 15...♕b6, when Black easily mobilizes his pieces, with nice play for the pawn. It is hard for White to keep his pawn and coordinate his misplaced pieces. 15...♖e8 followed by ...♕d7 is also worth considering. After the text there is a concrete opportunity.

16.♖c1

After 16.♘e4! ♗xd2 (16...♘xd5? 17.♗xb4+−) 17.♘xf6+ gxf6 18.♕xd2 ♘b3 19.♕b4 ♘xa1 20.♖xa1 White has nice compensation for the exchange.

16...♖fd8 17.♘e4 ♘xd5 18.♘xd5 ♖xc1 19.♗xc1 ♕xd5 20.♘f6+ gxf6 21.♕g4+ ♔h8 22.♕xb4

After a forcing sequence Kortchnoi has inflicted some structural damage. Khassanov still has active piece play though.

22...♖g8

Black also has counterplay after 22...♘c4 23.b3 (23.♕e7 ♔g7) 23...♖g8 24.f3 ♘e5 25.♕c3 h5.

23.g3

23.f3.

23...♖b8

Equality arises after 23...♘c6! 24.♕b5 (24.♕xb7 ♖b8) 24...♕xb5 25.axb5 ♘d4.

24.♗f4 ♘c6 25.♕c3

25...♘e5

With 25...♘d4! Black could have reaped the efforts of his courageous opening play. After 26.♖e1 ♘f3+ 27.♔f1 ♘xh2+ 28.♔g1 ♘f3+ Black has a draw, but probably not more.

26.♗xe5 fxe5 27.♖c1

In this ending with only heavy pieces White is slightly better. Kortchnoi won on move 56.

I hope you enjoyed this article, and that you will find the courage to try this SOS weapon!

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch

Dutch: Preparing the Staunton Gambit

1.d4 f5 2.f3!?

□ **Pascal Vandevoort**
■ **Marco Santo Roman**
Paris 2003

1.d4 f5 2.f3!?

In the King's Pawn Openings the Sicilian Defence boasts an excellent reputation. Indeed, the Sicilian is solely responsible for the statistical superiority of 1.d4 over 1.c4, and the nomenclature is particularly inaccurate here: surely the Sicilian is a Counter-Attack and not a Defence? Its logical counterpart in the Queen's Pawn Openings is the Dutch Defence. Curiously, the reputation of the Dutch cannot hold a candle to the Sicilian, while its strategical objective (controlling the central square next to the pawn that has just been advanced) is essentially the same. This may seem unreasonable, but of course a case can be made for arguing that f7 is a critical weakness in the initial position and that therefore f7-f5 in the opening can never be correct – especially not when played on the first move. However that may be, the consequence is that lots of people go berserk when faced with the Dutch. Thus, lines like 2.g4, 2.h3, 2.e4 are not really frowned upon, while such moves as 2.♗g5 (developing a bishop into space attacking nothing) and 2.♘c3 (in front of the c-pawn) are completely respectable. I love playing the Dutch as Black (perhaps partly for the same reason as Dimitri Reinderman –

see SOS-11) and yet, I had never seen (let alone taken seriously) the move that is the subject of this article: 2.f3.

Now I am sure that most readers will forgive me this lack of erudition, and some will undoubtedly feel that it is even laudatory. And, yet, if you think about it briefly is 2.f3 really that stupid? Yes, it takes away the square of the knight, but with 1...f5 Black has indicated that square e4 is central to his whole opening strategy. Moreover, by analogy to the Sicilian 2.f3 is what Alapin's 2.c3 is against the Sicilian, isn't it? Coming back to the Dutch Defence and the ways in which it is met: 2.e4 – the Staunton Gambit – is perhaps theoretically not the most dangerous line for Black, but it is popular on an amateur level, and it is always given a fair amount of space in all repertoire books on the Dutch. One of the main lines in the Staunton Gambit runs 2...fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3

So, why not 2.f3 to prepare a kind of Staunton Gambit?

I own quite a few books on the Dutch, and yet I never saw the move 2.f3 mentioned – until quite recently that is. In Gambit's 2009 publication *Win with the Stonewall Dutch* by Sverre Johnsen and Ivar Bern (and a contribution by Simen Agdestein) the authors mention 2.f3 as an alternative move order weapon to reach the Staunton Gambit, adding that it contains some independent points as well. Now, these authors deserve credit for having the guts to mention such an ugly move, and they deserve praise for making these points (I think for the first time). In this article I will augment their argument and indeed extend it – the Norwegian authors were of course unable to devote a lot of space on 2.f3 in a full-bodied work on the Stonewall.

2...♘f6

The most natural reply and perhaps the move you will most often encounter in practice when you decide to take up this SOS. Indeed, now 3.e4 fxe4 4.♘c3 is an immediate transposition to the Staunton Gambit – and going back to standard theory will certainly appeal to your SOS-shocked opponent. Especially, since the Staunton is no longer the frightful weapon it was in the 19th and early 20th century. However, as we will see White has another, far stronger, option.

Of course there are plenty of other moves that we should investigate after 2.f3. Some of them will lead to superior versions of the Staunton Gambit – for White that is, others will lead to obscure and little-investigated positions. All of them fun to play:

● 2...e6 does nothing to prevent White's plan, or does it? After 3.e4 fxe4 White cannot take back on e4 because of the check on h4. So, there is a point behind 2...e6, but we can be more clever still by turning 3.e4 into a real sacrifice.

Let us first consider **4.♘c3**

In most lines White is now much better off than in a regular Staunton Gambit. A few examples:

After **4...exf3** 5.♘xf3 White obtains dangerous compensation:

– 5...♗b4 6.♗d3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 0-0 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕e8 10.♕d2!? b6?! 11.♘e5 d6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♖xf6 13.♖xf6 gxf6 14.♖f1) 13.♕h6! ♕e7 14.♖f3 dxe5 15.♖g3+ and Black resigned, as 15...♔h8 16.♗xh7 is fatal, in Rivera-Esposito, Fuerteventura 1992.

– 5...♘f6 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.0-0 ♗d6 (7...♗e7) 8.♗g5 0-0 9.♕e1 h6?! 10.♗xf6 ♖xf6 11.♕e4 gave White superior chances in Schmitt-Kühn, Giessen 1991. This example illustrates the type of chances that White has when Black accepts the pawn.

Returning the pawn with **4...e3** also does not solve Black's problems. 5.♗xe3 and now:

– 5...d5 6.♗d3 (6.f4!? is also good) 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♘d7 8.♗b5 ♘e7 9.♗g5 (9.f4! ♘f5 10.♗f2 is clearly better for White) 9...h6 10.♗e3 ♘c6 11.f4 ♕f6 12.♗d3 ♘xc5 13.♕h5+ ♔d8. While White has missed some opportunities to keep it simple, he could now still have played 14.0-0-0 with a dangerous attack. Instead he went 14.♗xc5? ♗xc5 15.♘ge2 ♗d7 16.0-0-0 ♖c8 17.♔b1 ♘e7 18.♖hf1 ♔c7 19.♗b5 (19.♘e4! dxe4 20.♕xc5+ ♔d8 21.♕a5+ b6 22.♕xa7 exd3 23.♖xd3 with compensation) 19...♗xb5 20.♘xb5+ ♔b8 and the famous author on pawn structures won in Vilardebo Picurena-Kmoch, Prague 1931.

– 5...♘f6 6.♗d3 ♗e7 (6...♘c6; 6...♗b4; 6...d5?! 7.f4) 7.♕d2 b6 8.♘h3 ♗a6 9.0-0-0 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘c6 11.♘f4 ♘b4 12.♕e2 0-0 13.♔b1 ♕c8 14.a3 ♘bd5 15.♘cxd5 exd5 16.g4 and White obtained a strong attack in Kotov-Poliak, Moscow vs Ukraine 1937.

Best after 4.♘c3 is **4...♗b4!** and if you like this is the real point of 2...e6. I am not sure that White has sufficient compensation here.

So, if White wants to avoid 4.♘c3 ♗b4 he may consider **4.♘d2!?**.

Now, White will obtain good compensation for the pawn after 4...exf3 5.♘gxf3 ♘f6 6.♗d3 ♗e7 (old practice saw 6...c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.♘g5!? d5 9.♗xh7 which favoured White in Denker-Dake, Syracuse 1934) 7.0-0. While 4...♘f6 5.fxe4 is just better for White. Of course Black can try returning the pawn with 4...e3 when 5.♘c4 ♘f6 6.♗xe3 ♘c6 leads to interesting play.

4...♘c6!? is perhaps the critical reply. When rather than 5.♘xe4 ♘f6 I would prefer 5.c3 exf3 6.♘gxf3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0, now 9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♗xe4 d5 11.♗c2 e5 equalizes, but any reasonable queen move

(9.♕c2, 9.♕e2, 9.♕e1) provides compensation for the pawn.

● With 2...d6 Black makes no effort to prevent e4, so White should just go ahead and play it: 3.e4

White has achieved his aim, and Black is suffering:

– 3...♘f6 4.♗d3 (4.♘c3) 4...fxe4 5.fxe4 ♗g4 (after 5...e5 White may consider the pawn sacrifice 6.♘f3 exd4 7.0-0!? ♘c6 8.c3) 6.♗e2! ♗xe2 7.♕xe2 ♘c6 8.♘f3 e5 9.d5 ♘d4 (otherwise White is simply much better) 10.♘xd4 exd4 K.Müller-Hjorth, Bad Zwesten 1999. And now 11.♕b5+ looks good;

– 3...fxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 exd4 6.♕xd4 (6.♗c4!?) 6...♘c6 7.♗b5 ♗d7 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.e5 and White's chances are to be preferred. Toth-Dovzik, Sarospatak 2000;

– 3...e5 4.♘c3 (the easiest way to achieve an advantage is 4.dxe5 fxe4 5.♘c3!, while 5.♗e3 exf3 6.♘xf3 ♘c6 7.♗c4 was also good for White in Larsen-Christiansen, Copenhagen 2007) 4...c6 5.♗c4 b5 6.♗b3 b4 7.♘ce2 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.♕d2 a5 10.exf5 ♗xf5 11.♘g3 ♕d7 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♘xf5 ♕xf5 14.♘e2 with an obvious advantage in Gromovs-Corvi, Campobasso 2006.

● 2...c5 3.d5 ♘f6 4.♘c3

Now we have transposed into the so-called Dutch Benoni, or the Clarendon Court Defence as it was dubbed by English GM Jonathan Levitt. According to Jaan Ehlvest 1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 may certainly be met by 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3!? as in Izoria-Ehlvest, Batumi 2002. Ehlvest wrote an article on 1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5 in SOS Volume 4 (pp. 41-48).

In the afore-mentioned game Izoria-Ehlvest White had a huge positional advantage after 4...g6?! 5.e4 d6?! (5...fxe4 6.fxe4 d6 was better. In the game White is allowed to take on f5) 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.exf5 gxf5 8.♘h3 and Black is clearly suffering positionally.

Instead, 4...e5 5.e4 fxe4 (5...f4 6.g3± or 6.♘h3 ♘h5 7.d6 ♕h4+ 8.♘f2 ♘c6 9.g3! ♕f6 10.g4 Ehlvest-J.Williams, Las Vegas 2003) 6.fxe4 a6 7.♘f3 d6 8.a4 and with square e6 still weak Ehlvest prefers White.

Ehlvest felt that Black ought to try 4...e6 5.dxe6 d5!?. True, after 4...e6, 5.♗g5 can be met by 5...h6, but 5.e4 looks natural and good. Now 5...♗d6?! 6.♘b5 ♗c7 7.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 8.d6 ♕b6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.c4 ♘b4 11.f4 was much better for White in Kaputtze-WindPower, Internet 2006.

● 2...d5 is logical – Black increases his control over e4 – and endorsed by Bern and Johnsen in their Stonewall book. Mind you, players of the Ilyin-Zhenevsky or the Leningrad will not be so eager to create a big hole on e5.

Now it is important to realize that **3.e4** fxe4 4.fxe4 dxe4 5.♘c3 (5.♗c4 ♘f6 6.c3?! takes 'advantage' of our 2.f3 move order, but Black has the better game after 6...e5! 7.♕b3 ♗d6 Meessen-Froeyman, Antwerp 2000) 5...♘f6 merely transposes to the Staunton Gambit.

I don't want to keep the following spectacular grandmaster draw from you: 6.♗g5 ♗f5 7.♗c4 ♘c6 8.♘ge2 e6 9.0-0 ♘a5 10.♗d5!? ♕d7 11.♖xf5! exf5 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘f4 h5 14.♗e6 ♕d6 15.g3 ♖d8 16.♘cd5 c6

17.♕xh5+! ♖xh5 18.♘xf6+ ♔e7 19.♘g8+ ½-½, Predojevic-Sedlak, Nova Gorica 2008. Bern and Johnsen point out that White might like to try **3.e4!?**.

Now this is completely untested, and therefore ideal to wrong-foot your opponent. With no practical material available I will hint at few possible directions. Clearly, you don't need chess 960 to avoid the well-trodden paths. Do try this at home, at your local club, on the internet and in the tournament hall!

– 3...e6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 (4...dxc4 5.e4; 4...c6 5.cxd5!? – 5.e3 will transpose to normal theoretical schemes where White develops with ♕c2, ♗d3 and ♘ge2 – 5...exd5 6.♗f4 and play is about equal) 5.♗f4 (5.e3; 5.cxd5 ♘xd5! rather than 5...exd5 6.♗f4) 5...dxc4!? (other possibilities include 5...♗d6 and 5...♗e7 6.e3 0-0) 6.e4 fxe4 (or 6...♘c6 7.♗xc4 ♘xd4 8.♘ge2 with compensation for the pawn) 7.fxe4 ♗b4 8.♗xc4 0-0 (8...♘xe4 9.♘ge2!? is interesting while 9.♕h5+ g6 10.♕e5 ♘f6 11.♕xc7 ♕xc7 12.♗xc7 ♘d5 13.♗xd5 exd5 is equal) 9.♘ge2 ♘xe4 10.0-0

and White has compensation because of his lead in development and the weak pawn on e6.

– 3...e5!? (very exciting!) 4.dxe5 ♗b4+ (4...d4 is a weird Albin Counter Gambit with pawns on f3 and f5; 4...♕h4+ 5.g3 ♕xc4 and now the quiet 6.e3 promises White a plus, while 6.e4 ♕b4+ 7.♘c3 dxe4 8.a3 ♕c5 9.fxe4 is sharper and more enterprising) 5.♗d2 ♕h4+ 6.g3 ♕xc4 7.e3 (7.e4 ♕d4!) 7...♕c5 8.♘c3 leads to an obscure position where Black has a healthy pawn structure.

However, White's edge in development and his passed pawn on e5 should give him a decent plus.

– 3...c6 4.cxd5 (4.e3 e6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♕c2) 4...♘f6!? (4...cxd5 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♗f4±) 5.♘c3 (5.dxc6 ♘xc6 6.e3 e5, with compensation) 5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e5 is another position that deserves practical tests.

After 2...d5 the natural **3.♗f4** is quite playable of course, although I don't think that White has an edge. Stonewall-players are usually not that worried about the hole on e5, but not all lovers of the Dutch will be happy here. A normal continuation would be: 3...♘f6 4.e3 e6

and now White will soon have to make up his mind about his c-pawn. Will it move to c4 or c3?

3.e4

Preparing e4 is of course the main idea behind 2.f3 and nothing could be more logical than playing it immediately. Yet, some players have preferred not to sacrifice a pawn here by starting with 3.♗g5!?

– 3...d6 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.e4 a6 6.♘ge2 g6 7.♕d2 h6 8.♗e3 e5 9.0-0-0 ♕e7? 10.♘d5 with a substantial edge in De Santis-Zacco, Milano 2007;

– 3...g6 4.c4 (4.♘c3!?) 4...♗g7 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♕d2 is fine for Black, but White soon obtained a superior position in Belaya-Kharashkina, St.Petersburg 2001: 6...c5 7.d5 ♕b6?! 8.0-0-0 e5 9.e4 d6 10.♗d3 fxe4 11.♗xe4 a6 12.h4 ♕a5 13.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 14.h5 g5 15.h6 ♕c7? (15...b5!) 16.g4±;

– 3...e6 4.e4 has not occurred in practice yet;

– Critical is 3...h6 4.♗xf6 exf6 5.e4, and now 5...d5!?;

– 3...d5 would lead to familiar positions after 4.♘c3 (2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗g5 d5 4.f3 has been played by strong GMs – according to Kindermann Black is well-advised to play 4...♘c6 now to prevent e4) but White is by no means obliged to place his knight in front of the c-pawn.

3...fxe4

Black must be ready to accept the pawn after 2...♘f6. Here 3...d6 transposes to 2...d6 3.e4 ♘f6 above.

4.fxe4 ♘xe4

The only other move that comes into consid-

eration is 4...e5. However after 5.dxe5 ♘xe4 White has 6.♕d5 (6.♘f3 d5 is OK for Black, but not 6...♗c5? 7.♕d5+−) 6...♘c5 (6...♕h4+ 7.g3) 7.♘c3 when he appears to have an edge.

5.♗d3

5...d5

Black preserves his knight in the centre at the cost of weakening square e5. Retreating the knight with 5...♘f6 6.♘f3 e6 7.0-0 is similar to positions investigated above after 2...e6. White has obvious compensation for the pawn.

6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0

This must be a good move. Although the alternative 7.♘bd2 is suggested by Bern and Johnsen in *Win with the Stonewall Dutch* as fairly promising for White.

7...♗g4

Santo Roman is developing his queenside in order to be able to castle. The kingside certainly doesn't look like a safe hiding spot for the king. The pin on the knight also increases Black's control over square e5.

8.c3

A 'solid' move. Pawn d4 is protected and if Black castles queenside he must fear b4-b5. White can try to use his edge in development with 8.♘c3!? after 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 e5!? 10.♗e2! (the problem was 10.dxe5?! ♗c5+ 11.♔h1 0-0 and Black is better)

– White has two raking bishops after 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♕d6 (11...e4 12.♗g4) 12.♗g4, or 12.♖b1 0-0-0 13.♖b5 e4 14.♗g4+ ♔b8 15.♗f4, and

– 10...e4 11.♘g5 ♗xe2 12.♕xe2 ♕d7 13.♘f7 ♖g8 14.♖b1 really looks very suspicious for the second player.

Therefore the immediate 8...e5!? is stronger. Now 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♘xd4 (not 10...exd4? 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♖e1+ ♗e7 13.♗g5 winning) leads to the next diagram.

– Here 11.♗xb7 ♖b8 12.♘xd4!? is spectacular but it does not lead to an advantage after, say 12...♗xd1 (12...♖xb7 13.♕xg4 ♕xd4+ 14.♕xd4 exd4) 13.♗c6+ ♔e7 14.♗g5+ ♔d6 15.♗xd8 exd4;

– Better is 11.♗e3 ♘xf3+ (11...♗c5 12.♔h1) 12.gxf3 ♕xd1 13.♖axd1 ♗d7. Black has managed to exchange queens and

knights, while White is still a pawn down. In view of White's pressure a draw is the most likely result.

8...♕d7 9.♘bd2 ♘xd2 10.♗xd2 0-0-0

Black has managed to get his king into relative safety, and he has an extra pawn. White is the first to start the middlegame though. After Vandevoort's next I would definitely feel more comfortable sitting behind the white pieces.

11.b4 ♗xf3

11...e5 does not really work after 12.b5 ♘xd4 13.cxd4 e4 14.♕a4!.

12.♖xf3 ♖e8 So that the knight can retreat to d8 if necessary.

13.a4 13.b5!? ♘d8 14.♕a4 ♔b8.

13...e6 14.a5 ♗d6 15.a6

White has got there first.

15...♘b8 15...b6 16.♗b5 is a very annoying pin.

16.axb7+ ♔xb7 17.b5 ♖hf8 18.♕a4!?

This is very powerful. White does not need to fear the weakening of his kingside (he is already too far ahead on the queenside). However, missing some immediate wins further on, it is precisely because of his weak kingside that the game will end in a draw. 18.♖xf8 ♖xf8 19.♕a4 was also good, and the safe way to win was 18.c4.

18...♖xf3 19.♕xa7+ ♔c8 20.gxf3 e5?!

Objectively Black is now completely lost after White's next, but since Santo Roman manages to save half a point it is hard to criticize the practical value of this move. It is likely that both players were under time pressure here.

21.b6! c6 22.♕a8! e4 23.♖a7 ♕f5

24.♗a6+?

In time trouble it is easy to think that this wins a tempo by giving a free check with a piece that is under attack. However, it was more important to combine queen and rook into a joint attack. Leaving the king on c8 enables White to check on b7 with the queen. Thus, winning are 24.♖xg7! since 24...exd3? will lead to mate after 25.b7+ ♔d8 26.♕a5+, and 24.♕b7+ ♔d8 25.♕xg7 was also game over.

24...♔d8 25.♖b7 e3

Here 25...exf3 26.♖xb8+ ♗xb8 27.♕xb8+ ♔e7 28.♕c7+ ♔f6 29.♔f2 wins for White.

26.♗e1?

This throws away the win, as does 26.♗xe3? ♖xe3 27.♖xb8+ ♗xb8 28.♕xb8+ ♔e7 29.b7 ♕xf3 30.♕c7+ ♔f6 31.♕e5+! ♖xe5 32.dxe5+ ♔g5 33.b8♕ ♕e3+ with perpetual check. White was still winning with 26.♖xb8+! ♗xb8 27.♕xb8+ ♔e7 28.♕c7+ ♔f8 29.♗e1.

26...♕g5+ 27.♔h1

Unclear is 27.♔f1 ♕f4 28.♔e2 ♕xh2+ 29.♔d1. After 27.♗g3 ♗xg3 28.hxg3 ♕xg3+ Black must take the perpetual.

27...♕f4 28.♗g3 ♕xf3+ 29.♔g1 ♗xg3 30.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 31.♔h1

And the game ends in perpetual check. And what a game it was!

31...♕h3+ 32.♔g1 ♕g3+ 33.♔h1 ♕e1+ 34.♔h2 ♕f2+ 35.♔h1 ♕f3+

Draw.

CHAPTER 16

Igor Glek

Sicilian: the Intrepid 5...e5

Is 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 really that bad?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5!?

An audacious move: Black immediately plays e7-e5, without any preparation! Now the advance of the e-pawn is well-known in the Sicilian but usually only after the preparatory 5...a6 (many lines in the Najdorf) or 5...♘c6 (as in the Boleslavsky system after 5...♘c6 6.♗e2 e5). Of course the positions that we obtain may also have some similarities with the Sveshnikov (or Cheliabinsk) Variation.

After the immediate 5...e5 it does not make much sense to play natural moves like 6.♘b3 or 6.♘f3 because Black will obtain a position typical of the Najdorf Variation, where he may justifiably hope to find a more useful move than ...a6.

Therefore theory universally acknowledges 6.♗b5+ to be the principal move. The exchange of the bishops of the light squares (for my intention is 6...♗d7) is generally thought to be good for White, but, in my opinion, Black will get compensation.

First of all, he gains time (Black can occupy the all-important Sicilian c-file more quickly).

Moreover, the exchange of a set of pieces normally does not hurt the second player in the opening.

6.♗b5+ ♗d7

Actually 6...♘bd7 (7.♘f5!) is far more com-

mon. It has often been played by Viktor Kupreichik and some other GMs. But it's just another story.

I first started to play 6...♗d7 as a young master candidate in the 1970s – it was still in Soviet times.

7.♗xd7+

It is important to note that 7.♘f5?! doesn't work here (as it does after 6...♘bd7): 7...♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♕a5+! (but not 8...♘xe4? 9.♕d5 ♕d7 10.♗e3 ♘f6 11.♘bxd6+ ♗xd6 12.♘xd6+ ♔f8 13.♕xb7 ♕xb7 14.♘xb7 ♘bd7 15.0-0-0+−, Petrick-Strydom, Cape Town 2002) 9.♘c3 ♘xe4. Now Black is more than fine after 10.♗d2 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 ♕c7 12.♕f3 ♘c6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♘e3 g6 Vu T Minh-Nguyen Hong Minh, Ho Chi Minh City 2001, the subsequent 15.g4?! ♗h6 16.♔b1 ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 d5 gave Black had an obvious edge.

More interesting is 10.♕f3!?, and now:

– After 10...d5 11.0-0! ♘xc3 12.♗d2! White has great compensation for the pawn.

– However, Black has a 'simple' solution in the form of 10...♘xc3! 11.♕xb7 ♕a6 12.♕f3 ♕c6∓.

7...♕xd7

This is the crucial position that I want to investigate in this article. The knight can jump to five possible squares: 8.♘f5, 8.♘db5, 8.♘b3, 8.♘f3, 8.♘de2. Which is better? Let's see.

I 8.♘f5 (8.♘db5)
II 8.♘b3
III 8.♘f3
IV 8.♘de2

Superficially 8.♘f5 followed by ♗g5 looks very strong so we will start to show that Black has no problems here.

Variation I

8.♘f5

This move is 'too active'. The same goes for 8.♘db5. It seems that neither move brings White anything, although, obviously, Black has to respond accurately.

In comparison to the Sveshnikov Variation 8.♘db5?! here does not make so much sense.

● Black can take the pawn 8...♘xe4!?, and now:

– 9.♘xe4 equalizes at best after 9...♕xb5 10.♘xd6+ (not 10.♕xd6?! ♘c6 11.♘c3 ♕a6 12.♕d5 ♖d8) 10...♗xd6 11.♕xd6 ♘c6 12.a4 ♕c4 13.♗e3 ♖d8 14.♕c5.

– More interesting is the reply 9.♘d5!?, after 9...♘a6 10.c4 ♘f6 11.♘xf6+ gxf6 12.0-0 ♘c7 13.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 White has obvious compensation after both 14.b3 and 14.♕d3.

● Therefore it is simpler to play 8...a6, for after 9.♘a3 ♕c6 10.♕d3 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 ♖c8 the knight on a3 is out of play. In case of

12.♘d5 ♕a4 13.c4 ♘xd5 14.exd5, Black should not continue with 14...♕b4+?! 15.♗d2 ♕xb2 16.♖b1 ♕xa2 17.0-0 as in Pinkas-Ostermeyer, Goch 1991, but with 14...♗e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.f3 f5 17.♕b3 ♕xb3 18.axb3 ♘c5 with a slight edge for Black.

8...♘xe4

This is the correct response. Black does not fear the coming complications.

- 8...♘c6 9.♘e3 (9.f3) is pleasant for White.
- 8...d5 is an option:

– 9.0-0 is answered by 9...d4.

– 9.♗g5 can be met by 9...♘xe4 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕g4 f6 12.♖d1 ♕c6 13.♗e3 g6 14.♘d6+ ♗xd6 15.♖xd6 ♕xd6 16.♕c8+ ♕d8 17.♕e6+ ♕e7 18.♕c8+ ♕d8 with a draw.

– The problem in my opinion is 9.♘xd5 ♘xe4 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.c4!? which favours White.

- Black is a lot worse after 8...♕c6 9.♕f3 ♘bd7 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♖d3, Scarpa-Russo, Buenos Aires 1998.

9.♘xg7+

The only try for an advantage, but maybe White is better off with acknowledging that he has nothing by playing 9.♘xe4 ♕xf5 10.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 11.♕xd6. After 11...♘c6 12.♗e3 ♖d8 13.♕c5 Black can play 13...♕e6 14.0-0 b6 15.♕a3 ♕d6 with equal chances as in Ioseliani-Mai, Germany Bundesliga 1998/98. Or also 13...f6 14.0-0 ♕e6 15.f4 ♖d5 16.♕c4 0-0 17.♖ad1 ♖fd8 18.♖xd5 ♕xd5 19.♕xd5+ ♖xd5 20.fxe5 ½-½, Tonsingh-Shabsh Abdulatif, Lucerne ol 1982.

9...♗xg7 10.♘xe4 d5 11.♗h6

White uses tactics to develop. After 11.♘g3 0-0 (not 11...d4?! 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♕f3 0-0-0 14.♗g5±) 12.♘h5 f5 (12...♘c6?! 13.♗h6) 13.♘xg7 ♔xg7 14.f4 e4 15.♗e3 ♘c6 16.c3 d4 Black is slightly better in view of 17.cxd4 ♘b4 or 17...♖ad8.

Worse is 11.♘c5 ♕c6 12.♕g4 0-0 13.0-0 f5 14.♕b4 b6 15.♘b3 a5∓, Instefjord-Agustsson, Norway 2002/03.

11...0-0 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7

13.♕h5!

White already has to take care. Thus, 13.♘g3?! ♘c6 14.0-0 f5 15.f4 e4 16.♕h5 d4 gave Black a great position in Janosevic-Bertok, Ljubljana ch-YUG 1960.

Please note that 13...f5? 14.f4! exf4 (14...e4 15.♕d4+ ♔g8 16.0-0-0) 15.♕d4+ ♔g8 16.♕xf4 ♕e6+ 17.♔d2 ♕f6 18.♖hf1 favours White, Panbukchian-Kovacevic, Pula 1990.

With the text White sacrifices a piece to gain a draw by perpetual.

13...f5!?

Black plays for the win! Of course 13...dxe4 leads to perpetual check: 14.♕g5+ ♔h8 15.♕f6+ ♔g8 ½-½, Muratov-Zilber, Novgorod 1961.

14.0-0-0!?

A creative reply! Not 14.♕g5+ ♔h8 15.♕h6 ♘c6 (15...♕g7 16.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 17.♘d6 ♘c6 18.0-0-0 d4 19.♘xb7 ♘b4 20.a3) 16.♘g5 ♖ae8∓. After castling Black is not forced to take the piece, but he can play

14...♘c6

After 14...fxe4 15.♕xe5+ White has a strong attack:

– 15...♔f7 16.♖xd5 ♕e7 17.♕g3 or 17.♕h5+ ♔g7 18.♖hd1 ♔h8 19.♔b1.

– Instead 15...♖f6 16.♖xd5 ♕e6 17.♕g3+ ♖g6 18.♕c3+ ♕f6 19.♕c8 ♕c6 20.♕d8 ♕f6 21.♕c8 ♕c6 22.♕d8 ♕f6 23.♕c8 was agreed drawn in Kotter-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga B 1991/92.

By not taking the knight Black preserves a small edge because of his centre which more than outweighs the slight weakness of his kingside.

So, neither 8.♘f5 nor 8.♘db5 promise White anything (in fact Black may hope for more than equality).

Variation II

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■ **Igor Glek**
Germany Bundesliga 2008/09

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.♘b3

This move is less popular than 8.♘de2 or 8.♘f3. However, in my opinion, it is not weaker to say the least. Play now resembles the Najdorf line with 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3, especially when White is going to castle queenside. The exchange of the light-squared bishops favours White, although, as usual Black has gained time to start operating along the c-file. First, it is essential for Black to prevent ♗g5.

8...h6

White's game is preferable after 8...♗e7 9.♗g5 and 8...♘c6 9.♗g5.

In case of 8...♕c6 9.♕d3, White preserves a pleasant edge after 9...♘bd7 10.♗g5 and now:

– 10...♗e7 11.♘a5 ♕c7 12.♗xf6 ♘xf6 13.♕b5+ ♕d7 14.f3 ♖c8 15.0-0-0 b6 16.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 17.♘b3, or 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♘a5 ♕c5 13.♘c4.

– 10...a6 11.0-0-0 ♖c8 12.♔b1 ♗e7 13.h4 b5 14.f3.

Stronger is 9...h6 to prevent 10.♗g5 after all. Now after 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♘a5 (11.♖d1 ♖c8 12.♗e3 a6) 11...♕c7 12.♘c4 ♖c8 13.♘e3 ♘c5 14.♕b5+ ♕c6 15.f3 ♕xb5 16.♘xb5 a6 17.♘c3 ♘e6 Black has enough counterplay to compensate for the weakness of square d5.

9.♗e3!?

White plays by analogy to the Najdorf line 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3.

● 9.f3 ♘c6 (9...♗e7 is possible but Black plays for ...d5) 10.♗e3 ♖d8 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.♕xd5 ♘b4 13.♕d2 d5 14.a3 ♘c6 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.exd5 ♖xd5 and mission accomplished, Black has equalized.

● 9.♕d3 ♘c6 10.a3 ♖d8 (10...0-0-0!? 11.♗e3 d5) 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.exd5 ♘e7 13.0-0 and now both 13...f5 and 13...♕f5 are stronger than 13...g5?! 14.♗e3 b6 15.a4 as in Nguyen Van Huy-Pham, Phu Quoc 2007.

● 9.0-0 ♗e7 and now after 10.f4 0-0 11.h3 Black should play 11...exf4 12.♗xf4 ♘c6 or 11...♕c6.

Fleuren-Ostermeyer, Goch 1992, was quickly drawn after 10.♕d3 0-0 11.♗e3 a6 12.a4 ♕c7 13.a5 ♘bd7 14.f3 ♖ac8 15.♖f2.

9...♘c6

I was planning to play ...d5 as quickly as possible, but maybe it was more exact to play 9...♗e7.

● After 10.♕d3 ♘a6!? 11.0-0-0

– 11...0-0 12.f3 ♘b4 13.♕d2 b5 14.g4 a5 15.♔b1 a4 16.♘c5 ♕c6 both sides have chances.

– Equally complicated is 11...♘c7 12.f3 b5 (12...0-0 13.g4 ♖fd8 14.h4 d5 15.g5), for example: 13.a3 a5 14.♗b6 b4 15.♗xc7 bxc3 16.♗xd6 cxb2+ 17.♔xb2 a4 18.♗xe7 ♔xe7 19.♕c3 ♕b7 20.♕xe5+ ♔f8 21.♕d6+ ♔g8 If 22.e5, then 22...axb3 (not 22...♘h5 23.♕b4 ♕xb4 24.axb4 axb3 25.♔xb3 ♘f4 26.g3 ♘e6 27.♖d6 ♔h7 28.c4±) 23.exf6 bxc2+ 24.♔xc2 ♔h7.

Play is equal after 22.♕b4 ♕c7 23.♕c5 ♕b7 24.♕b4.

● 10.♕e2

– Obviously this is another complicated position that deserves further practical tests. A long line to illustrate the character of the play: 10...♘a6 11.0-0-0 ♘c7 12.f4 ♕g4 13.♕f2 0-0 14.h3 ♕e6 15.g4 b5 16.g5 exf4 17.♗xf4 hxg5 18.♗xg5 b4 19.♘d4 ♕e5 20.♗f4 ♕c5 (20...♕a5 21.♘c6) 21.♘a4 ♘xe4 22.♕f3 ♕d5 23.♖he1 f5 24.♘xf5 ♕xf5 25.♕xe4 ♖ae8=.

– Also not bad is 10...d5!? 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0-0 ♘c3 13.bxc3 ♕c6 with compensation.

● In case of 10.f3 White is going castle queenside, when again we reach such typical Sicilian positions with castling on opposite sides. Black should play 10...♘a6 with the idea of ♘a6-c7, and d6-d5.

10.♕e2 ♗e7

And now instead of

11.f3

which allows Black to solve his problems, White should have played 11.0-0-0!: answering 11...0-0-0 (or 11...♖c8 12.f3 0-0 13.g4) with 12.♕c4! ♕e6 13.♘a5 ♕xc4 14.♘xc4 ♔b8 (14...♘g4 15.♘b5 ♘xe3

16.fxe3 f6 17.♘bxd6+ ♗xd6 18.♘xd6+ ♔c7 19.♘f7 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♖f8 21.♘d6 h5 22.c4± 15.f3 ♘e8 (15...♖d7 16.♖d2 ♖hd8 17.♖hd1 ♘e8 18.a4 ♗g5 19.♗xg5 hxg5 20.♘b5) 16.♔b1 with a slight advantage.

In the game Black could execute his strategical idea and equalize.

11...d5!? 12.exd5

Black has compensation after 12.♘xd5!? ♘xd5 13.♖d1 (13.0-0-0 ♘c3 14.bxc3 ♕c7) 13...♘c3 14.bxc3 ♕c7.

12...♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.0-0 0-0 15.c4 ♕e6 16.♘c5 ♗xc5 17.♗xc5

Draw.

Variation III

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■ **Igor Glek**
Metz 2009

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.♘f3

Now White will try to manoeuvre his king's knight to d5 – via ♘f3-d2-c4(f1)-e3 or ♘f3-h4-f5(g3, ♘g2)-e3. But it sure will take time.

8...♕c6

Again not 8...♗e7 9.♗g5±, but 8...h6 is possible and may transpose.

9.♕e2

9.0-0!? ♘xe4!? (safer is 9...♘bd7 or 9...h6) 10.♘xe4 ♕xe4 11.♘g5 (11.♖e1 is another idea) 11...♕c6 12.f4 h6 13.♕h5 g6 14.♕h3 ♗g7:

● Now 15.♘e6 can be met by 15...♗f6!? or 15...fxe6!? 16.♕xe6+ ♔d8.

● 15.♘xf7 ♔xf7 is very sharp:

– Black defends after 16.fxe5+ ♔g8 17.exd6 ♕xd6 (17...♕b6+ 18.♔h1 ♔h7 19.♗xh6+–) 18.♕b3+ ♔h7 19.♗xh6 ♕b6+.

– 16.f5 was played in Schönthier-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga 1990/91. Now according to my analysis Black can survive the attack with 16...g5 17.f6 ♗xf6 18.♗xg5 ♘d7 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 20.♕h4 d5 21.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 22.♖f1 ♕xf1+ 23.♔xf1 ♖ac8 24.♕h5+ ♔f6 25.♕h4+ ♔e6 26.♕g4+ ♔f6 27.♕d7 ♖hd8=. Of course this has to be checked carefully.

Please note that White is just clearly worse after 9.♗g5? ♘xe4 10.♘xe5 (10.♘d5 ♘d7) 10...♘xc3 11.♘xc6 ♘xd1 12.♘xb8 ♘xb2 13.♖b1 ♖xb8 14.♖xb2.

9...h6

9...♘bd7 is also possible – White can exchange his dark-squared bishop but Black's position is quite safe: 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♘h4 ½-½, Klavins-Petersons, Palanga 1961.

10.0-0

A plan with castling on opposite wings is possible but should not be very dangerous for Black: 10.♗d2 ♘bd7 11.0-0-0

11...a6 12.♔b1 ♖c8 13.♗c1 ♗e7 14.♘h4 g6 15.g3 b5 (15...♔f8 16.f4 ♔g7∞) 16.♘g2 ♔f8 (16...♘b6! Bosch; 16...♘c5?! 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕b7 19.f4±; 16...♕b7 17.♘d5! ♘xd5 18.exd5±) 17.f3?! (17.f4 ♔g7) 17...♕b7! 18.♘d5 (18.♘e3 ♖xc3 19.bxc3⩲) 18...♘xd5 19.♖xd5 ♔g7 20.♘e3 ♘f6 21.♖d3 ♖c5 22.♖hd1 ♖hc8 and Black was doing fine in Otte-Bosch, Dieren 2009.

10...♘bd7

Also possible is 10...♗e7 11.♘h4 g6 12.f4 ♘bd7 13.♘f3 ♖c8 14.a4 ♔f8 15.♗e3 ♔g7 16.♔h1 a6 as in Gufeld-Romanishin, Tbilisi 1979.

11.♖e1

Black had an easy game in Souleidis-Ostermeyer, Porz 1991, after 11.♘d2 ♖c8 12.f3 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♕xd5 15.♘e4 f5 16.♘c3 ♕c4 17.♕xc4 ♖xc4 18.♗e3 ♗c5 19.♗xc5 ♖xc5 20.♖ad1 ♔e7. Interesting is 11.♘h4!?.

11...a6 12.a4

After 12.♘d2 ♖c8 13.♕f3 ♗e7 14.♘f1 unclear play results from 14...♗d8!? 15.♘g3 ♗a5 16.♗d2 h5 or 16...g6 17.♖ad1 ♔f8 18.♘d5 ♗xd2 19.♖xd2 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♕c7. Also good is 14...♘c5 15.♘g3 g6 16.♗e3 ♔f8 (16...h5!?) 17.♖ad1 ♘a4 (17...♔g7) 18.♘xa4 ♕xa4 19.♖xd6 ♔g7 as in Barczay-Malich, Pecs 1964. In the game White only won after a blunder by Black on move 27.

12...♖c8 13.a5 ♗e7 14.h3

14...♕c4

More roads lead to Rome here. True after 14...0-0 White has 15.♘h2!?. But Black can more or less force a draw with 14...♘c5 15.♖a3 (15.♗d2 ♘e6 16.♘h4 ♘d4 17.♕d3 ♕c4 18.♖a4 ♕xd3 19.cxd3 ♘d7 20.♘f5 ♘xf5 21.exf5 ♘c5 22.♖c4 ♖c6 23.d4 ♘d3) 15...♘e6 16.♖d1 (16.♕d3 ♘c5 17.♕e2 ♘e6=) 16...♘c5 17.♖e1.

15.♕d1

Play is also equal after 15.♕xc4 ♖xc4 16.♘d2 ♖c5 17.♖a4 0-0 18.♘c4 ♖fc8 19.♘e3 ♗d8 20.♘f5 d5 21.exd5 ♘xd5 22.♗d2.

The same verdict holds for 15.♖a4 ♕xe2 16.♖xe2 ♘c5 17.♖c4 ♖c6.

15...♘c5 16.♘d2

Black has decent counterplay in case of 16.♘h4 g6 17.♕f3 ♘e6 18.♖a4 ♕c6 19.♕d1 ♔f8 20.♗e3 ♔g7 21.♘f3 ♗d8.

16...♕e6 17.♕f3 0-0

18.b3

In this middlegame position both sides have their pluses and minuses. Black aims for counterplay along the c-file. White will try to use square d5. I believe that such positions are quite playable for Black.

18.b4 ♘cd7 19.♕d3 is met by 19...♖c7.

18...♘cd7

White would be slightly better after 18...♘h7 19.♘c4 (19.♘d5 ♗g5) 19...f5 20.exf5 ♖xf5 21.♕d5 ♘f6 22.♕xe6+ ♘xe6 23.♘e2.

19.♗a3

19.♘c4 allows us to illustrate the characteristic Sicilian exchange sacrifice:

– 19...♖xc4 20.bxc4 ♕xc4 (20...♖c8 21.♘d5 ♗d8) 21.♕g3 ♔h7 22.♕d3 ♖c8.

– 19...♖c7 20.♗a3 ♖fc8 21.♖ed1 ♖xc4 22.bxc4 ♕xc4 23.♖d3 ♘c5 24.♗xc5 ♕xc5.

As usual in such positions Black's compensation for the exchange is sufficient.

19...♗d8 20.♗b4 ♘b8!

This is an important manoeuvre – the knight is going to c6 from where it could jump to d4 or b4. Such an idea we may see, for example, in the games of David Bronstein.

21.♘c4 ♘c6 22.♖a4 ♘xb4!?

A very concrete decision. Now Black's counterplay gives White no time to bring his second knight to the key square d5.

23.♖xb4 ♕e7! Threatening 24...d5.

24.♖a4 ♖c5 Black combines his counterplay along the c-file with an attack on the a5 pawn. **25.♕d3 ♕c7 26.♖e3 ♕c6 27.♖a1 ♗c7 28.♖d1**

Maybe 28.♖f3!? was the best chance – now after 28...d5 29.♖xf6! ♕xf6 30.♘xd5 ♕e6 31.b4 ♖c6 32.♘ce3 not, as in a game, Black will sacrifice the exchange, but White! And it looks that White's compensation is enough.

28...♗xa5! 29.♘a4 ♖xc4!

Black is playing to win! Playable was also 29...♖b5, but in this case many exchanges are coming and it is hard to believe that any result other than a draw will be possible.

30.♕xc4 ♕xc4 31.bxc4 ♖c8 32.♘b2

♖c6 33.♖dd3 ♘d7

It is clear by now that Black will get dangerous pawns for the exchange, and White should fight very hard for the draw. Since this is a book on openings I give the remaining moves without comments.

34.♖d5 ♗c7 35.♘a4 ♖xc4 36.♖c3 ♖xc3 37.♘xc3 ♘f6 38.♖d3 ♔f8 39.f3 ♗a5 40.♘a4 ♔e7 41.c4 ♘d7 42.♔f1 ♗b4 43.♖b3 a5 44.♔e2 ♔d8 45.♖d3 ♔c7 46.♖d5 ♔c6 47.♖b5 ♘f8 48.♖d5 ♘e6 49.g3 ♘d4+ 50.♔f2 b6 51.f4 f6 52.♔e3 ♗c5 53.♘c3 h5 54.♘e2 a4 55.♘c3 a3 56.fxe5 fxe5 57.♔d3 ♘e6 58.♔c2 ♗d4 59.♘b5 a2 60.♖xd6+ ♔c5 61.♖d5+ ♔b4 62.♘xd4 a1♕ 63.♘xe6 ♔xc4 64.♘xg7 ♕c3+ 65.♔d1 ♕f3+ 66.♔d2 ♕f2+ 67.♔d1 ♔c3

White resigned.

Variation IV

8.♘de2

Theory recommends this move. The knight will defend pawn e4 from g3, does not get in the way of the f-pawn (f2-f4), and is ready to jump to f5, or via the squares f1 and e3 to d5. A possible drawback is that Black can sometimes embarrass the knight on g3 by pushing his h-pawn – the march h7(h6)-h5-h4-h3 is certainly not imaginary.

8...♕c6

Attacking pawn e4 and going for Najdorf-like piece coordination (the b8 knight is developed to d7).

● In the old game Fuderer-Jacob, Munich 1954, White obtained a pleasant edge after 8...♗e7 9.♗g5 ♕c6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♕d2.

● Playable is 8...h6 which may transpose to the main line. After 9.♘g3, Black may decide to play for a quick ...d5 with 9...♘c6 as in Calota-Andreescu, Baile Tusnad 1997. After 10.♗e3 ♖d8 11.♕d2 d5 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♕xd5 14.♕xd5 ♖xd5 15.♔e2 ♗c5 Black had achieved his aim.

After 9.0-0 we reach the diagrammed position.

– Now I am not a great fan of 9...♘c6. Thus 10.♗e3 d5 11.♘xd5 ♘xe4 12.c4 as in Pähtz-Petrenko, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003, was just better for White.

10.♘g3 should favour White too. In that case, best for Black is 10...♖d8 to play for ...d5 again as in the old game Radovici-Zinn, East Berlin 1968.

– More flexible is 9...♗e7 when for instance 10.♗e3 ♕c6 11.♕d3 ♘bd7 12.♖ad1 a6 13.♘g3 g6 14.h3 ♖c8 15.♖fe1 ♔f8 16.♘f1 ♔g7 as in Gawehns-Ostermeyer, Germany Bundesliga B 1990/91, is strategically healthy.

● I don't trust the alternatives to 8...h6 or 8...♕c6. Indeed, 8...♘c6 9.♗g5 is just a very unpleasant position for Black. It is this sort

of position that makes theory frown upon the whole 5...e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 line.

● If you are really inclined to take such chances than at least you should do it with the dubious (but surprising) 8...♕g4!?

– Now, the passive 9.♘g3 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 is not such a big problem for Black after 10...♘c6 11.f3 h6. For example, 12.♘b5?! 0-0-0 13.c4 d5! 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xa7+ ♘xa7 16.exd5 ♖xd5+ 17.♔e2 ♗c5 18.♖d1 ♖xd1 19.♔xd1 ♘c6 gave Black the initiative in Martinez-Perez Rodriguez, Santiago de Cuba 2009. Stronger was 12.♘f5 0-0-0 13.♘e3 ♘e7 14.♘cd5 ♘fxd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 ♗e7 with equality.

However, White has three 'gambit' moves which all deserve attention:

– 9.♘d5!? ♘xd5 (9...♘a6 10.0-0 ♕xe4 11.♘ec3 ♕c4 12.♘xf6+ gxf6 13.♕f3) 10.♕xd5 ♘c6 11.♘g3 ♕e6 12.♕d3 0-0-0 13.c4 is at least slightly better for White.

– 9.0-0!? ♘xe4 10.♘d5 ♕d7 11.♗e3 ♘c6 12.c4 gives White good compensation.

– 9.♕d3!? and now Black should grab some pawns with 9...♕xg2 10.♖g1 ♕xh2 11.♗g5. This is very dangerous for Black of course. Still some brief analysis for the really adventurous spirits among you.

Simply bad for Black is 11...♗e7 12.♘b5 0-0 13.♘c7 ♘c6 14.♘xa8 ♖xa8 15.0-0-0.

11...♘c6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘d5 0-0-0 14.♕f3 ♕h6 15.♖h1 ♕g5, and now 16.♖g1 is equal. However, White may prefer 16.♖h5 ♕g6 (16...♘d4 17.♕c3+) 17.0-0-0 ♗h6+ 18.♔b1 ♗g5 19.c3 ♔b8 20.♘g3 with compensation.

11...♘bd7 12.♗xf6 (this is simpler than 12.0-0-0 ♕xf2 13.♗e3 ♕f3 14.♖g3 ♕h5 15.♘b5 which occurred in J.Willemze-S.Ernst, Vienna 2003) 12...♘xf6 13.♕b5+ ♘d7 14.♘d5 ♖b8 15.♘c7+ ♔d8 16.♘d5 g6 17.♕a5+ ♔e8 18.♕xa7 ♗h6 (18...♗e7 19.0-0-0) 19.♕a3. In all objectivity, I believe that 8...♕g4 is too dangerous.

9.♘g3

9...h6

Once again it is important to prevent ♗g5. White is just better after 9...g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♗g5 ♘bd7 12.♕d3 h6 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.♖fd1 ♖d8 15.♘f1 0-0 16.♘e3 Shmits-Zilber, Novgorod 1961.

Too early is 9...h5, after 10.♕f3 ♘bd7 11.♗g5 h4 12.♘f5 h3 13.g3 ♘b6 14.♘xg7+ ♗xg7 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♕xf6 White had a won position in Kritz-Mikavica, Lausanne 2003.

In a few high-level games 9...♘bd7 was tried. White is still better, though, after 10.♗g5 and now:

– 10...♖c8 11.0-0 g6 12.♕f3 ♗g7 13.♖fd1 0-0 14.♘f1 h6 15.♗xf6 ♘xf6 16.♘e3 Nicevski-Ljubojevic, Novi Travnik 1969.

– 10...g6 11.♕d2 h6 12.♗xf6 ♘xf6 13.0-0-0 h5 14.♕d3 0-0-0 15.♕f3 ♗e7 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♖xd5 Estrin-Vasiukov, Moscow 1961. Black's disadvantage is perhaps not disastrous, but such positions hold few attractions for the second player. Indeed, they are certainly not the reason why I play this line!

10.0-0

Practice has also seen 10.♕f3 ♘bd7 11.♗e3 b5 12.a3 a6. Just to give an example of this type of Sicilian let's follow the game Duarte Barahona-Dominguez Aguilar, Aguascalientes 2007: 13.0-0 g6 14.♖fd1 ♗e7 15.h3 ♔f8 16.♘f1 ♔g7 Black is castling by hand, a

returning theme in this line. 17.♘h2 ♖ac8 Black has a perfectly playable 'Najdorf'. 18.♖ac1 ♕b7 19.♖d3 ♖c4 20.♖e1 a5 21.♕e2 b4 22.♘d5 ♘xd5 23.♖xd5 ♕c7 24.♖xa5

Now the game went 24...♖xe4 25.axb4 ♖xb4 26.♖a7 ♖b7 27.♖xb7 ♕xb7 28.c3 ♕b3 29.f4 ♖b8 30.fxe5 dxe5 31.♕d2 with a draw. Black could have preserved a slight edge with 24...♖xc2 25.♕d3 ♕xa5 26.♕xc2 bxa3 27.♗d2 ♕a6 28.bxa3 ♘c5 29.♗b4 (29.♘g4 ♕xa3) 29...♘d3 30.♖d1 ♘xb4 31.axb4 ♖b8.

10...♘bd7 11.f4

The most direct attempt to refute Black's play.

11...h5!? 11...g6!? was another option. **12.♕f3 h4** And here 12...0-0-0 could also be investigated. **13.♘f5**

13...0-0-0!

A clear improvement over 13...♘c5? 14.fxe5! dxe5 15.♗g5!±, Timmermans-Bosch, Vlissingen 2009. Now 15...♘cxe4 fails to 16.♘xe4 ♕xe4 17.♖ae1! and White has a winning advantage. 13...g6 14.♘e3 favours White, but 13...h3!? is also interesting.

14.a4

14.♕f2 ♘xe4 15.♕xa7 is met by the immediate 15...h3, or by 15...♘xc3 16.bxc3 h3 17.gxh3 ♖xh3 18.♖b1 (18.♗e3 g6 19.♕a8+ ♔c7 20.♕a5+ b6 21.♕a7+ ♕b7 22.♕xb7+ ♔xb7 23.♔g2 ♖h8 24.♘g3 f5 25.a4) 18...♕c5+ 19.♕xc5+ ♘xc5 (or 19...dxc5). Note that White cannot play 14.♗e3? because of 14...g6. After the text a sample line runs: **14...♔b8 15.h3 g6 16.♘e3 exf4 17.♕xf4 ♗h6 18.♕f3 ♖he8 19.♘ed5 ♗xc1 20.♖axc1 ♘xe4 21.♕xf7 ♘e5 22.♕f4 ♕c5+ 23.♔h2 ♘g3 24.♖fd1 ♖f8 25.♕e3 g5** and this favours Black.

So, we have seen that 5...e5 6.♗b5+ ♗d7 leads to a complicated game. At the moment I don't see how White obtains an advantage. Both active moves 8.♘f5 and 8.♘db5 are not dangerous for Black. White has to make a choice between 8.♘f3, 8.♘de2 and 8.♘b3. I suppose that 8.♘b3, as IM Shilow played against me, promises White some hope for an advantage, but obviously this continuation requires further practical tests.

CHAPTER 17

Sipke Ernst

Moscow Variation: A German Speciality

The immediate 7.e4!?

This ancient line of the Moscow Variation has not been very popular with strong players lately, although it is fully playable. Don't let the bad placement of the white king put you off! I recommend 7.e4 for several reasons:
1) Play is original and very interesting,
2) the move 7.e4 is completely forgotten, so your opponents won't be well prepared, and
3) the shock value of 9.♔e2!.
This early king-move has been known for a long time and had its peak in the 1980s, when especially East-German GMs like Uhlmann and Teske were playing this move on a regular basis. Since 2000, however, I can only find 11 games in my database. I think it's time for a revival!

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■ **Thomas Fiebig**
Netherlands 2009/10

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6
Presently, Black is holding his own in the lines starting with 6.♗h4, so top players are also looking at the alternative 6.♗xf6. This used to be the main line, but at some point it was agreed that Black has enough compensation for his deficit in space and central influence, owing to his pair of bishops.
6...♕xf6 7.e4!?
This was first played in a game between Jasnogrodsky and Baird, New York 1894!

Nowadays, 7.e3 is the absolute main line. Apart from 7.e3, 7.♕b3, 7.g3 and 7.♕c2 are also more popular than 7.e4.

7...dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+

9.♔e2!?

A cool looking move, guaranteeing a lot of disapproving faces when played in a team match. Definitely worth a try!

In the stem game, Jasnogrodsky continued 9.♘c3 ♘d7 10.a3?! ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 c5 12.♗e2 e5 13.0-0 cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.♘xd4 0-0, and the game ended in a draw.

Actually, 9...c5 is even better. An example is the game Adianto-Bareev, Cap d'Agde 2002: 10.♖c1 cxd4 (10...0-0!? might even be stronger) 11.♕xd4 ♕xd4 12.♘xd4 0-0 13.a3 ♗e7! (there is no need for giving up the two bishops, although 13...♗xc3+ 14.♖xc3 is also not bad) 14.g3? (this appears to be too weakening; it was safer to play 14.♗e2) 14...♖d8 15.♘b3 ♘c6 16.♗g2 (this move involves a pawn sacrifice, but I don't see any compensation for White. 16.♗e2 was still preferable) 16...♘e5 17.0-0 ♘xc4, Black was simply a pawn up for nothing and went on to win the game.

Apart from 9.♘c3 there is a second alternative, 9.♘ed2. This move has done reasonably well in practice, but I don't think that such a passive knight retreat can assure White something interesting: 9...♘d7 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 0-0 12.♗d3 e5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5+, with equality, Eklund-Nordström, Linköping 1996.

Instead 12.♕e3 momentarily prevents the ...e5 break, but Black gets easy play after 12...c5 13.♗d3 (13.0-0-0!? leads to interesting play, but seems to me to be too dangerous for White) 13...cxd4 (13...b6? 14.♕e4) 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5.

9...♕f4

All possible queen moves have been tried, except for 9...♕f5. Still, this move is not entirely stupid. The queen supports Black's pawnbreaks ...c6-c5 and ... e6-e5. Also, White won't be able to gain a tempo on the queen with g2-g3. Meanwhile it is not entirely clear what the drawbacks of this move are.

For 9...♕d8, see the third game.

After 9...♕f5 the main try is 10.♕d3 0-0 (or 10...♘d7 11.g4 – after 11.c5 0-0 12.g4 Black can play 12...♕xg4! 13.♖g1 ♕f4 and White has not enough compensation for the pawn – 11...♕xg4 12.♖g1 ♕f4 13.♖xg7, with unclear play) 11.g4!? (this move is double-edged. It might be the start of a dangerous attacking plan involving g4-g5 at some point, but it also weakens the black squares very much...) 11...♕f4 (11...♕xg4? 12.♘f6+ gxf6 13.♖g1 wins the queen) 12.♕e3 ♕c7 (after 12...♕xe3+ 13.fxe3 the best assessment is probably unclear, though I would prefer White because of the easy development and the space advantage) 13.g5

13...h5? (13...hxg5 is better: 14.♘exg5 – to 14.♕xg5 Black probably does best to react with 14...f5!) 14.♘f6+! ♔h8 (14...gxf6 15.gxf6 and mate in a couple of moves) 15.♘xh5, and White is much better.

Instead of 10.♕d3 I also analysed:

– 10.♘g3 ♕a5 (or 10...♕f4 and now 11.♘h5 is a nice double attack, but it will fail to impress your opponent as there is 11...♕e4 mate!) 11.c5 ♕d8 12.a3 ♗a5, and here my computer program advises the very artificial 13.♔d3?! 0-0 14.♔c2 followed by ♗d3 or ♗c4. Still, Black's chances are preferable, as the white king is not so safe on the queenside.

– 10.♔e3?! (if this move is really the strongest, then I suspect everybody will switch to 9...♕f5 – the king makes room for the bishop) 10...♗e7 (10...0-0 11.c5 ♗a5 12.g4 ♕d5 13.♘d6) 11.♘e5?! ♘d7 12.g4 ♗g5+ 13.♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 14.f4 ♕e7 and Black is better. In chess, king safety is important and I feel that all this space grabbing by White will backfire later on.

On move 11 White should just play 11.♗d3 ♕a5 12.♖e1 0-0 and now the king has to rush back, since e3 is no square for a king when the board is full of pieces and the centre is open. Unfortunately, White's little experiment doesn't yield him any advantage after 13.♔e2 ♘d7 14.♔f1 e5 and at least White's king is safe, but Black is okay anyway.

Apart from 9...♕f5, another possible move is 9...♕g6. Now the correspondence game Schrancz-Persits, Simagin Memorial 1985, continued 10.♔e3!? f5 (after 10...♘d7 Black surprisingly runs into trouble thanks to 11.♘h4! ♕h7 12.c5 0-0 13.♗d3 and both the bishop on b4 and the queen are badly misplaced) 11.♘e5 f4+ (11...♕h7 12.♕h5+) 12.♔d3 ♕f5 13.g4 fxg3 (13...♕h7 14.♕f3 0-0 15.♔c2 and White is better) 14.hxg3 ♘d7 15.♕h5+ ♕xh5 16.♖xh5 ♘xe5+ 17.♖xe5 and White was much better.

10.♕c2

White has an important choice to make: where to put the queen?

10.♕d3 will be analysed in the next game, Vokac-Dreev, Ohrid 2009.

10...f5!?

An understandable decision. Black takes immediate action, as the white king is badly placed for the moment.

Things can easily go wrong for Black after the superficial 10...♘d7 11.g3 ♕c7? (11...♕g4 is better) 12.c5!, threatening both 13.a3 and 13.♘d6+. After 12...♕d8 (to make room for the bishop) 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.a3 ♗a5 15.♘e5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 White has a great position!

11.♘ed2

11.♘c3 has been played before, but I am not convinced of White's chances after 11...e5 (or even the simple 11...♘d7 12.g3 ♕g4 13.♗g2 0-0 – 13...e5!? – 14.♖he1 e5! 15.♔f1 e4 16.♘d2 ♘f6, and Black is at least equal) 12.dxe5 ♕xc4+ 13.♔e1 ♕f7. Normally this position would be quite good for White, but now that the right of castling has been forfeited I think White has problems finishing his development!

11...♘d7

Black hurries with ...e6-e5.

12.g3 ♕c7

During the game I was mostly worried about 12...♕g4. I considered 13.h3 ♕h5 14.♗g2 e5

15.g4 (after 15.♔f1 the rook on h1 is out of play) 15...fxg4 16.hxg4 ♕xg4 17.♖ag1 and here White has enough compensation for the pawn thanks to his well-placed pieces.

13.c5 b6 13...0-0 14.♘c4 and the bishop is in trouble. **14.a3 ♗xd2 15.♔xd2!**

Making room for the bishop. The king will find a safe spot on the queenside.

15...bxc5 16.♖e1 0-0

17.♔c1!

A nice prophylactic move. White waits to see how Black arranges his pieces in order to react to Black's play.

17.♖xe6 is better for Black after 17...♘f6 18.♖e1 cxd4 19.♔c1 ♖d8.

17...♕a5?

Later in the game the queen will often be exposed to attacks, so Black should probably keep the queen on c7 for now.

The alternatives are:

– 17...cxd4 18.♘xd4 ♘b6 19.♘xe6 ♗xe6 20.♖xe6 which is slightly better for White.

– Also possible is 17...♘f6 – the following line is more or less forced: 18.♗c4 ♘e4 (18...♘d5 19.dxc5) 19.dxc5 ♘xc5 20.♘d4 ♔h8 21.♗xe6 ♕d6 22.♗xc8 ♕xd4 23.♖d1 ♕f6 24.♕xc5 ♖b8! 25.♖d2 ♖fxc8 and if 26.♕xa7 then 26...c5! followed by ...c5-c4-c3, with serious counterplay, so White probably should settle for the better double rook ending with 25.♕d4.

18.♖xe6 Or 18.♗c4!?.

18...cxd4 19.♗c4 ♔h7 20.♖he1!

Now all of White's pieces are playing!

Interesting is 20.h4 ♘f6 21.♘g5+ hxg5? 22.hxg5+ ♔g6 23.♖xf6+ gxf6 24.♕e2! fxg5 25.♕e7, and mate is unavoidable, but Black can simply reply 21...♔h8!, after which there is no easy way for White to continue the attack.

20...♗a6?

After this move Black is lost. Also bad was 20...♘f6?, in view of 21.♖1e5 ♕d8 22.♕xf5+ ♔h8 23.♘h4!.

The only way to continue the fight was 20...♘c5, though after 21.♖6e5 d3 22.♗xd3 ♘xd3+ 23.♕xd3 White is better.

21.♗xa6 ♕xa6 22.♘xd4

White has a winning position. Unfortunately I was running out of time and squandered my advantage.

22...♕a5 23.♖e7 ♖f7

24.g4

I missed a nice tactic here: 24.♘xf5! ♔h8 (both 24...♕xf5 25.♖xf7 and 24...♖xf5 25.g4 give White a decisive material advantage) 25.♖xf7 ♕xe1+ 26.♕d1 ♕xd1+ 27.♔xd1, and Black is hopeless in the ending.

24...♖af8 25.♘xf5

Also 25.gxf5 is not so bad, but I wanted to keep my pawn structure intact!

25...g6 26.♕c4?

This move throws away a great deal of White's advantage. I was reluctant to play 26.♕b3!, because of 26...♔h8 27.♘xh6?! ♖xf2 and things seemed not entirely clear to me. However, I missed 27.♖1e3!, winning immediately.

26...♕c5! 27.♕xc5 ♘xc5 28.♘d6 ♖xe7 29.♖xe7+ ♔g8 30.b4 ♘d3+ 31.♔c2 ♘xf2

It's safe to say that I didn't get the most out of my middlegame advantage.

32.g5 hxg5 33.♖xa7 ♘g4 34.♘e4 ♘xh2 35.♘xg5 ♘g4 36.a4? After 36.♖c7 Black still has problems to solve.

36...♖b8

And here my opponent offered a draw, which I happily accepted, as I had less than 30 seconds on the clock. Despite the errors I think it was an interesting game.

□ **Marek Vokac**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Ohrid 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♔e2 ♕f4 10.♕d3!?

It is hard to say which move is better, 10.♕d3 or 10.♕c2. On d3 the queen can be exposed to an attack by a black rook on d8, but for the moment the queen is more actively placed than on c2. Also, this move gives White the option of ♕e3.

10...♗e7

Black has an important alternative here, the sharp 10...f5!. After the normal 11.♘c3 (11.♘ed2!?) the lines fork.

– 11...♘d7 12.g3 ♕d6 (or 12...♕g4 13.h3 ♕h5 and here a young Boris Spassky played 14.♗g2 0-0 15.g4 ♕f7 16.gxf5 exf5 17.a3 ♖e8+ 18.♔d2 ♗d6 19.♖ae1 ♘f6 with unclear play, Spassky-Reicher, Bucharest 1953. It seems to me that the light-squared bishop is better off on d3 or e2, so I recommend 14.♔d2!?) 13.♗g2 0-0 and now the best is 14.c5! (14.♖hd1 e5!? – 14...♕c7 15.♕e3 prevents Black's desired ...e6-e5 break – 15.dxe5 ♕e6 16.♔f1 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5, Miedema-Savchenko, Béthune 2006 – now it is White who is looking for a way to equalize) 14...♕c7 (14...♕e7 is worse because of 15.♖he1 b6 16.♔f1 bxc5 17.d5! and after 17...♗xc3 – the 'clever' 17...c4 looks dangerous because of 18.♕c2 ♗xc3 19.♖xe6 ♕f7 20.♕xc3 cxd5 21.♖ae1 and White has a strong initiative – 18.d6 ♕f6 19.♕xc3 ♕xc3 20.bxc3 White has an advantage) 15.♖he1 b6 (15...e5?? 16.♕c4+) 16.♔f1 bxc5 17.♔g1!, and with this calm prophylactic move White ensures some advantage. Black is one pawn up for the moment, but there are a lot of weaknesses in his camp.

– 11...0-0 12.g3 ♕c7 13.a3 ♗d6 (or 13...♗e7 14.♗g2 ♘d7 15.♕e3!? – after the

natural 15.♖he1 e5! 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 18.♔f1 ♕f6 Black has a comfortable position – 15...♘f6 16.♖he1 c5 and chances are about equal) 14.♗g2 ♘d7 15.♖hd1 e5 16.dxe5 ♗xe5 17.♔f1 f4, and Black equalized in Gorelov-Filipenko, Moscow 1986. It seems that Black is doing okay here, so White needs an improvement in the lines following 10...f5, or he should prefer 10.♕c2.

11.g3 ♕c7 12.♗g2 ♘d7 13.♖he1 e5 14.dxe5?

After the text-move Black has no problems neutralizing White's initiative. The rest of the game is a good example of what can happen if White doesn't play dynamically enough. After Black completes his development it is very hard for White to fight the two bishops.

White should play sharply in order to get something out of his development advantage. Therefore, 14.♔f1!?, a move that involves a piece sacrifice, is necessary. Now 14...f5 is critical, although Black does have some other options.

● 14...f5 15.♘c3 e4 (there is no backing out now...) 16.♘xe4! fxe4 17.♕xe4 ♘f6 18.♕g6+ ♔f8 19.♘e5!. This move prevents Black's defensive idea ...♗g4 followed by ...♗h5. White has two pawns and active play for the sacrificed material. Meanwhile, Black has some problems finishing his development. Especially the h8-rook won't be able to enter the game for some time to come.

The following lines are exemplary:

– 19...♗e6 20.d5! cxd5 21.cxd5 ♗g8 22.♕f5! ♗f7 (22...♗h7 loses by force: 23.♕e6 ♗d6 24.♖ac1 ♕e7 25.♖c8+ ♖xc8 26.♕xc8+ ♕e8 27.♘g6+ ♗xg6 28.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 29.♕xb7) 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕e6+ ♔f8 25.♖ac1 ♕d8 26.♖e3 with more than enough compensation.

– 19...♗b4 20.♖e2 ♗e6 21.c5! ♗f7 22.♕c2 ♗a5 (22...♕d8? 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7 24.♕b3++–) 23.a3 ♕d8 24.b4 ♗c7 25.♖ae1 ♗h5 26.♘g6+ ♗xg6 27.♕xg6 looks extremely dangerous for Black.

– Also 19...♗d6 20.c5 ♗xe5 21.dxe5 ♘d5 (21...♘g8? 22.♖e4 and 23.♖f4) 22.e6 looks very unpleasant for Black.

● 14...exd4?!

– 15.♕a3!, and now Black is mated after 15...♗xa3?? 16.♘d6+, while 15...c5? is also bad, in view of 16.♘xd4 0-0 (16...cxd4 17.♘d6+ ♔f8 18.♖xe7 wins) 17.♘b5 and White has a lot of positional pluses.

This makes 15...♘e5! effectively the only move. After 16.c5 0-0 (16...♘xf3?! 17.♘d6+) 17.♘xd4 b6 (17...♖d8 18.♖ad1 ♘g4 – 18...♗g4 19.f3 ♗d7 20.♘d6 with an advantage. The central control of the white pieces outweigh Black's bishop pair – 19.h3 ♘f6 20.♘d6 ♗xd6 21.cxd6 ♕xd6 – 21...♖xd6? 22.♘b5 – 22.♘e6 ♕xd1 23.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 24.♔e2 ♗xe6 25.♔xd1 and although Black has very good drawing chances, White is slightly better) 18.♕c3 White has an edge. Black can easily slip with the active looking 18...♗a6+?! 19.♔g1 ♘d3? which loses immediately because of 20.♘f5! f6 21.cxb6 axb6 22.♕xc6.

– Other lines offer White nothing: 15.♘xd4 is the most logical continuation, and although this move is not without poison I think Black equalizes with correct play: 15...0-0 16.♘f5 (16.♖ad1 ♘c5 is equal) 16...♗b4! 17.♘ed6 looks interesting, as it is dangerous to take the exchange... 17...♗xe1 (unfortunately Black doesn't have to take the bait and can equalize with 17...♘e5! 18.♖xe5 ♗xf5 19.♕xf5 ♗xd6) 18.♘e7+ ♔h8 19.♖xe1 ♘f6 20.♘exc8 ♖axc8 21.♘xc8 ♖xc8 22.♕a3! and White has an edge.

– In the only game featuring 14.♔f1, Kishnev-Gorelov, Moscow 1984, the players agreed to a draw after 15.♕xd4 0-0 16.♖ad1.

● 14...0-0 looks safer, but White can try to make something of his lead in development by 15.♘c3 ♗f6 16.d5 (the only move to try for an advantage; 16.♖ad1 exd4 17.♘xd4 ♘c5 is fine for Black and 16.♘e4 ♗e7 repeats moves) 16...♘c5 17.♕c2 ♗g4 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♘e4 ♘xe4 20.♕xe4 ♗d7! (20...♗xf3 21.♗xf3 with a small advantage) 21.♘xe5 ♖ae8! 22.f4 (also after 22.♘xd7 ♖xe4 23.♘xf6+ gxf6 24.♖xe4 White cannot count on an advantage) 22...♗xe5 23.fxe5 f6 24.♔g1 ♖xe5 25.♕d4 and Black is very close to equalizing.

14...♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♔f1 0-0 17.♕b3 ♕c7

Black is already slightly better. The knight on e4 looks pretty but the black bishops are very strong.

18.♕e3 ♗e6 19.b3 ♖fe8 20.♕f3 Not 20.♘c5? ♗f6!. **20...♕a5 21.g4?**

Not the kind of move grandmasters are happy to play. Probably Vokac felt desperate here already.

21...♖ad8 22.♔g1 ♖d4 23.h3 ♖ed8

Black has a close to winning advantage, and eventually won the game.

In the next game, played more than 50 years ago (!), we will deal with the solid 9...♕d8. Though this move looks kind of timid, it should not be underestimated, as it has some advantages over 9...♕f4. Most obviously, the move g2-g3 won't gain a tempo, and if White decides to play g2-g3 anyway, Black can decide if he wants to play ...♕c7 or not. A drawback is that the ...e6-e5 break is not supported for the moment, though, as we will see, Black often achieves this break nonetheless. This game also features the biggest expert on the 7.e4 line in the Moscow Variation. Wolfgang Uhlmann played

this line five times according to my database, scoring two wins and three draws.

□ **Wolfgang Uhlmann**
■ **Ludek Pachman**
Moscow 1956

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♔e2 ♕d8!?

This solid move should not be underestimated. Black has collected the bishop pair and the white king is badly placed on e2, so it is all on White to prove that his strategy is correct.

10.g3

In the game Teske-Neverov, Pardubice 1999, 10.♕b3 was tried. Black gradually equalized after 10...♗e7 11.♖d1 (it appears that the d1-square should be preserved for the king's rook. Also, this move doesn't prevent the ...c6-c5 break anyway) 11...♘d7 12.g3 0-0 13.♗g2 c5! 14.♖he1 (14.dxc5 ♕c7) 14...cxd4 15.♘xd4 a6 16.♔f1 ♕c7.

10...0-0 11.♗g2

The immediate 11.♕b3 is also possible, though it gives Black an additional option which is quite interesting: 11...♗e7 12.♗g2, and now:

– 12...b5!? 13.c5 e5 14.♘xe5! (in the game Uhlmann-Tischbierek, Cottbus ch-DDR 1983, there followed 14.dxe5 ♗e6 15.♕c3 ♗c4+ 16.♔e3 and I'm not sure whether Black actually has enough compensation for the pawn) 14...♕xd4 15.f4 ♗xc5 (or 15...♗e6 16.♖hd1 ♗xb3 17.♖xd4 ♗d5 18.♖xd5! cxd5 19.♘d6 ♗xd6 20.cxd6 and the powerful passed pawn is worth more than the exchange) 16.♖hd1 ♕b4 17.♕xb4 ♗xb4 18.♖ac1 and White has a lot of pressure for the sacrificed pawn.

– 12...♘d7 13.♖hd1 ♕a5 was seen in Cebalo-Sveshnikov, Leningrad 1984. (13...♕b6 14.♕c2 ♘f6 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♔f1 c5 – 16...♖d8 17.c5! and Black has a cramped position – 17.dxc5 ♕xc5 18.♘d2 with a small advantage) 14.♕c3!? (14.♔f1 b6 15.♔g1 is interesting; the pawn sacrifice 14.c5?! b6 15.♔f1 bxc5 16.♔g1 is not convincing, e.g. 16...♖b8 17.♕c2 ♕b6 18.b3 cxd4 19.♘xd4 ♘e5 and White's compensation is not sufficient) 14...♗b4 (14...♕f5 15.♘e5! is the main idea) 15.♕c2 f5 16.♘ed2 e5 17.♘b3 ♕c7

and here 18.c5! is strong (Cebalo played 18.dxe5 ♘xe5 19.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 20.♔f1 ♕c7 and Black was doing fine), as Black's dark-squared bishop is in trouble. Black's best chance is probably 18...e4 19.♕c4+ ♖f7 20.♕xb4 exf3+ 21.♗xf3 ♘f6 and Black is not without counterplay (Black will play

...f5-f4 soon, activating Black's pieces) but still the pawn should count for something.
– Finally, 12...♕b6 13.♖hd1 ♕xb3 14.axb3 is slightly better for White.

11...♘d7

12.♕d3?!

This time, the queen is not so well placed here, as it quickly can become a target for Black's e-pawn.

In a later game against Sveshnikov in Sarajevo 1983 Uhlmann tried 12.♕c2, but Black easily equalized after 12...f5 13.♘c3 ♕f6 14.♕b3 ♗a5 15.♖he1 e5 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 18.♔f1 ♕f6 and in fact it is White who should watch out or he will end up in a worse position.

12.♕b3, however, is an improvement. After the obvious 12...♗e7 13.♖hd1 the game transposes to the lines following 11.♕b3.

12...♗e7

Black has a much stronger plan: 12...f5! 13.♘c3 e5! 14.dxe5 (it is also dangerous to take with the knight: 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♕a5 16.f4 ♖d8 17.♕c2 ♗e6) 14...♕e7 15.♖he1 ♘c5 16.♕e3 (also 16.♕c2 f4 is very dangerous) 16...♗e6 17.b3 f4! 18.gxf4 ♗g4 19.♔f1 ♘e6 this is the kind of stuff White should avoid. Black is probably winning already!

13.♖hd1 ♕c7 14.♘c3

The superficial 14.♖ac1 runs into 14...e5 15.d5 f5!.

14...♖d8

Now, 14...e5 is answered by 15.d5.

15.♔f1 ♘f6

Also interesting is 15...b6!? 16.♖ac1 ♗b7 followed by ...c6-c5.

16.♖ac1 Not 16.c5? ♗xc5, but 16.♕e3!? is interesting. **16...a6**

17.b3?!

This inaccuracy offers Black the chance to equalize immediately.

Black would still have some small problems to solve after 17.♕e3, as after the logical 17...c5 18.dxc5 ♖xd1+ 19.♖xd1 ♗xc5 20.♕e5! the ending after 20...♕xe5 21.♖d8+ ♔h7 22.♘xe5 is very bad, so Black should go for 20...♕e7, though then too White keeps some pressure after 21.♘e4.

Possibly 17.♕e2!? is even stronger, as here the queen is not exposed to any attacks.

17...c5!

Now the game quickly peters out to a draw.

18.d5 exd5 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.cxd5 ♗d7 21.♘d2

Of course not 21.d6?? ♗xd6 22.♕xd6 ♗b5+ and Black wins.

21...♗d6 22.♘c4 b5 23.♘xd6 ♕xd6 24.♖d2 ♖ac8 25.♔g1

Draw.

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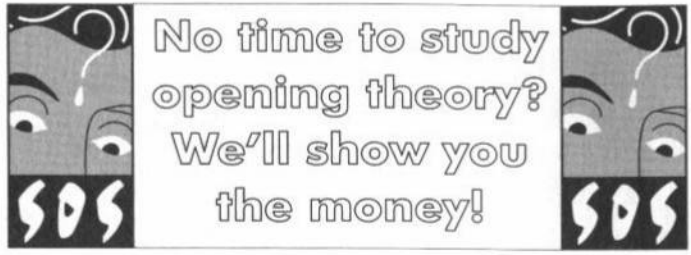

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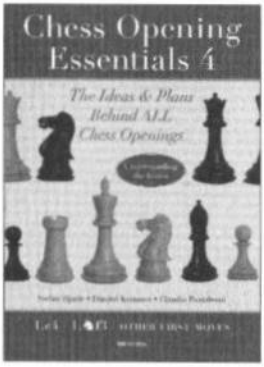
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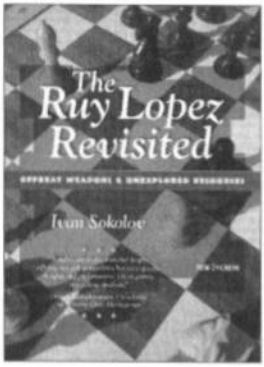
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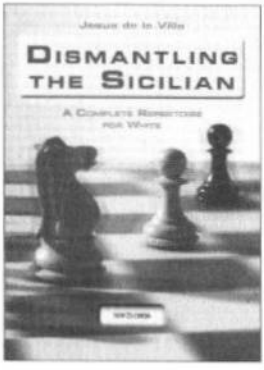
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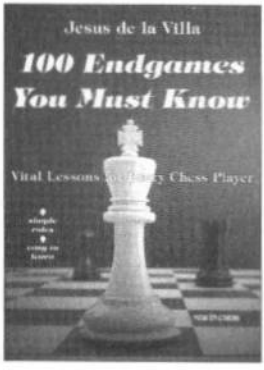
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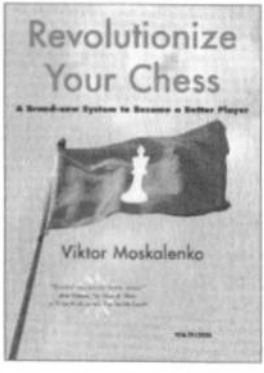
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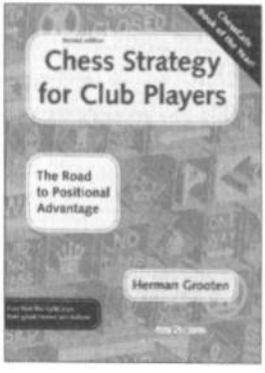
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